

**Keeping up with young people and a changing counselling environment: exploring  
the use of between session text messages to support face-to-face counselling.**

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## **Abstract**

Solution focused brief therapy [SFBT] is a strengths-based, future focused, goal oriented therapy that originated in the United States (De Jong & Berg, 2012). There is considerable research that demonstrates the effectiveness of the therapy's main tenets; co-construction of client-led directions, amplification of positive change and instances of success (Nelson, Welsh, Trup, & Greenberg, 2011). Some research highlights the helpfulness of specific SFBT techniques such as miracle question (Jones-Smith, 2011), exceptions (Henson, 2015) and between session tasks (Jones-Smith, 2011). Most research, however, uses standard writing and talking as data. Less common is the inclusion of electronic platforms for conducting SFBT.

This research primarily focuses on between session tasks by exploring whether the use of text messages can support a client to complete such tasks. Four New Zealand co-educational high school students from Year 11 to Year 13 volunteered to attend four counselling sessions which were recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed. At the end of each session the clients and the counsellor co-constructed text messages that the counsellor would send to them between sessions. Throughout the research, the text messages were examined to determine whether they supported SFBT principles and transcripts of participants' feedback about the usefulness of the text messages were analysed thematically. The main findings were that using text messages fits very well with the intention of SFBT to promote client autonomy. Furthermore, co-construction of text messages enabled the counsellor to use appropriate client language when contacting the client between sessions. Both findings suggest the use of text messages when working with high school clients enables them to engage with counselling and focus on their own goals between sessions. This research adds to the literature on; Solution Focused Brief Therapy in high school settings, New Zealand specific Solution Focused Brief Therapy research and combining technology with face-to-face counselling practice.

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# **1 Introduction**

This introduction will cover the mental health status of New Zealand, the increasing use of technology globally, and the subsequent increase in use of E-therapies (the practice of counselling services delivered over a technology). There is increasing demand globally to utilise technology, and growing interest to increase accessibility and availability of counselling services to youth. With a passion for, and a work history of supporting youth, I have been curious about how to integrate an element of technology and face-to-face practice.

I have always had an interest in supporting people. After I finished my high school education, I worked at a Camp America summer camp for people with disabilities in Iowa, United States. This was eye-opening, as I was a naïve 18-year-old learning how to communicate with people with a wide spectrum of disabilities. As I reflect on this experience now, I realise how much this shaped my career pathway. From there I studied my undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in psychology and education, graduating in 2013. Following on from this I am working toward completing a Masters of Counselling degree, with this thesis as a component.

With a youth client base, I was curious about what would happen if I integrated an element of technology with traditional Solution Focused Brief Therapy [SFBT] face-to-face practice. My interest in this area has developed from a background of working and volunteering for Youthline, a not for profit organisation that provides free text, phone, web-chat and email support for young people. In addition, I have experienced working on placement as a high school guidance counsellor. Increasingly, I found that young clients coming to face-to-face counselling have adapted their world around a device and relate to friends through various social media platforms. It appeared that some clients even struggle to have a face-to-face conversation

due to the unfamiliarity of the context. This connection to their devices predominantly occurred out of counselling sessions, however, sometimes even occurred during counselling sessions. For example, on occasion, a client's phone would 'ping' during a session and the client would have the uncontrollable desire to check their device. This idea of the popularised 'txt' term of 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO) was fascinating to me in the context of counselling. Given my developing use of SFBT, I became interested in the possible usefulness of harnessing students' connections to their technology in relation to a SFBT approach in counselling.

Increasingly, mass-media is playing a valuable role in increasing the understanding and awareness of mental health within New Zealand, and there are several campaigns that challenge the negative stigma associated with mental health (e.g. Like Minds, Like Mine <https://www.likeminds.org.nz/> and Mental Health Awareness week by the Mental Health Foundation <http://www.mhaw.nz/>). In the past, most mental health portrayal within New Zealand was of a negative and violent nature (Shaw, White, & Deed, 2012). Increasingly, that view has been changed with more of an emphasis on understanding and promoting positive aspects of health, with terminology such as 'wellbeing' becoming popularised (Shaw et al., 2012). Further, government support is targeting youth mental health by providing free counselling in most high schools and specialist youth mental health services for more complex mental illness. This is due to an increased vulnerability of youth for mental health issues and suicidality (Ministry of Justice, 2017; Ministry of Social Development, 2016; OECD, 2018).

Young people often find a face-to-face counselling session to be unfamiliar and this can sometimes be a barrier to seeking mental health support. Literature suggests that many young people find that it is easier to disclose 'potentially embarrassing topics' (e.g. sexuality) online than to a therapist in a face-to-face setting (Glasheen, Shochet, & Campbell, 2015). Perhaps as a consequence, there is now an increase in the number of therapists using technology to

conduct counselling and the term 'E-therapy' has been popularised. The term is characterised by the utilisation of the internet to communicate between the client and the therapist online (Manhal-Baugus, 2001).

Current population statistics indicate that 4,785,100 people permanently reside in Aotearoa (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). Given that the majority of children (around 13-14 years old) do not own a mobile phone and some elderly are still dependant on landline technology, the number of mobile phones in the country (4,761,000) now exceeds the number of people who are using them (Schwab & Sala-i-Martin, 2015). It is increasingly common for workplaces to provide a work cell phone and some of the population will often carry around multiple devices for work and personal use. This increasing use of technology in New Zealand and globally has seen a growth of research into the practice of counselling services delivered over a technology platform (e.g. internet, text message, web-chat) (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014; Glasheen et al., 2015; Haxell, 2014; Navilluso Medical, 2016), however there is some uncertainty about E-therapies amongst face-to-face counsellors. The concerns are predominately around confidentiality, ethics and client safety.

This research will look at whether an element of technology can be combined with face-to-face SFBT sessions, supporting the strengths of E-therapy for young people (accessibility, perceived confidentiality and disclosure) and respecting the strengths of face-to-face counselling (safety, emotion and body language cues). In addition, this research will also explore what it is like for clients and for myself as a counsellor, to include co-construction of text messages into the Between Session Task within SFBT. Therefore; initial research questions that I was curious about exploring were; whether the inclusion of an element of technology could be combined with face-to-face SFBT and whether sending between session text messages would increase engagement in face-to-face practice.

Between session text messages to support face-to-face counselling

The following thesis is set out into chapters: Literature Review, Methodology, Method, Results and Discussion. The literature review describes relevant literature including, the current mental health of New Zealand youth, the Solution Focused approach, help seeking, and E-therapy. The methodology section describes the data collection methods that were utilised for and influenced the work; case study analysis approach, thematic approach and an interpretive approach. The method covers the recruitment process, participants, procedure, ethics and the thematic analysis of the data. The results are presented, followed by a discussion and conclusion.



## **2 Literature Review**

Poor mental health statistics, in addition to poor help-seeking behaviours, are all too high in Aotearoa. This literature review will review the current mental health status in New Zealand, affirming the importance of offering counselling in a traditional face-to-face setting. This literature review will also explore alternative options for delivering therapies, including E-therapy. The chapter also explores SFBT, including its historical context, its social constructionist underpinning, and therapy techniques. The literature review concludes with a rationale for the current research.

### **2.1 Mental Health of Young People in New Zealand**

While statistics surrounding poor mental health exist for many population groups, there are particularly concerning statistics around the mental health of young people in New Zealand. Our youth suicide statistics are among the highest in the OECD. In the latest OECD report comparing suicide data in 2012, New Zealand had the highest rate of youth suicide (15-24 years) amongst OECD countries. Males have always had higher suicide rates than females in New Zealand and this rose dramatically in the mid 1980's (Ministry of Social Development, 2016; OECD, 2018).

Recent statistics by the chief coroner, Judge Deborah Marshall, showed 606 people died by suicide in the 2016/17 year, which is the third year in a row that the number has increased. Worryingly, the statistics show that the younger population are more vulnerable to suicide, with the 20-24-year old age cohort recording the highest number of suicide deaths (n=79). Māori populations also continue to have the highest suicide rate of all ethnic groups represented in Aotearoa (Ministry of Justice, 2017).

To gain knowledge of the concerns of young New Zealanders, in 2000, the government of the day commissioned a survey into health and wellbeing within secondary education in New Zealand, called Youth 2000. Now on its third edition, the survey (Youth '12) explores current concerns of young New Zealanders, providing insight into the youth population. The aim of the Youth '12 survey was to update and extend the original surveys, by adding new questions about employment, types of drugs used (e.g. 'legal' highs) and mental health. Data were also collected on respondents' height and weight, due to rising concerns of obesity in New Zealand. The Youth '12 survey provides an excellent holistic picture of the youth population (Clark et al., 2013).

The Youth '12 survey had a sample of 8500 secondary school students from 91 schools throughout New Zealand. The report identified key areas of concern such as bullying, depression, and lack of access to health care (Clark et al., 2013). A recent article on addressing mental health needs in young people identifies a key focus for all health professionals in New Zealand working with young people should be to reassure them that their health needs are important (bpacnz, 2015). Paramount to achieving this is the importance of being able to offer a space for private and confidential one-on-one counselling for young people.

Additional focus is needed to support the mental health of young people experiencing health inequalities. In particular, Māori students are at greater risk of suicidality, poor health choices and exposure to violence (Crengle et al., 2012).

## **2.2 Supporting Young People in New Zealand**

Statistics around the poor mental health of youth in New Zealand highlight the importance of having accessible and effective counselling services, ideally within secondary schools. The government of the 1970s, instituted guidance counselling in high schools in

response to a concern about the ‘delinquent behaviour’ of adolescents. This was reflected later under the Education Act 1989 with the policy: “*Under the Education Act 1989 every state school is required to ensure that students get good guidance and counselling*” (Ludbrook & New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2012, p. 251). Initially, school guidance counsellors sought further resources because of the number of students who presented with serious mental health problems. More recently, the government and schools have focused on improving the health and wellbeing of all young people. Commonly referred to in Aotearoa as ‘hauora’, which comprises of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing. The government also has a focus on young people who are currently disadvantaged (King, 2000; Minister of Health, 2016). As a result, the government created the Health Promoting Schools in 1991, based on the principles of the 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. The Ottawa charter, initiated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1986 is a key guiding document about the elements required for people to have good wellbeing (e.g. food, peace and shelter) (World Health Organisation, 2018). Another example, of government intervention is the creation of the Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project in 2012 with the aim to improve mental health and wellbeing of 12 to 19-year-olds. The programme includes 26 initiatives in schools, health settings and communities. The Prime Minister’s Youth Mental Health Project also has a focus on the use of E-therapy and initiatives such as SPARX, an online Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy based game (Minister of Health, 2016).

During a similar period of the development of counselling came the establishment of regulatory boards to meet the demand of practicing therapists. For example, the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) was formed in 1969 and the primary association for counsellors, the New Zealand Counselling and Guidance Association, was founded in 1974 (Hermansson, 1999; Ludbrook & New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2012; Miller,

2004; NZAC, 2016). The latter is now known as the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) after a name change in 1990. It is the professional association for school guidance counsellors who are bound by its Code of Ethics, alongside the ethics of the Post-Primary Teacher Association (PPTA). In the 1970's PPTA demanded of the government that school guidance counsellors be required to train through university postgraduate counselling programmes. While the initial programmes, offered at the University of Canterbury and Massey University were similar to one another, current programmes differ across four universities. The counselling models that underpin qualifications that are appropriate for school counsellors are Narrative (Winslade & Monk, 2006), Eclectic (Hermansson, 1999) and Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) (De Jong & Berg, 2012). As the Masters programme in which I am enrolled uses solution-focused therapy as a foundation, the next section describes this model.

### **2.3 Solution Focused Brief Therapy [SFBT]**

The model was created by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg in the 1980s at the Milwaukee Brief Family Therapy Center (De Jong & Berg, 2012). The transition from the approach used at the Milwaukee Brief Family Therapy Center to SFBT was developed step-by-step through use of feedback from families (clients) about what worked for them (Nelson et al., 2011). Specifically, De Jong and Berg (2012) watched hours of live and delayed footage to observe clients' reactions to the therapist's specific questions, behaviours and words, and, subsequently, they could see patterns of what was working and what was not. Key ideas that they believed worked, and that now form the basis of SFBT practice, include maintaining a future focus, reframing problems or problem talk, amplifying positive change and exceptions, helping clients find client-led solutions, believing in the client's ability to change and recognising that the client is the expert in their life (Hanton, 2011).

More recently, SFBT has developed to include several counselling techniques, including the development of goal abilities, future focus on solutions, scaling questions, search for exceptions and homework tasks. Such techniques allow clients to construct their own vision of a preferred future and possible ways to work towards this (Nelson, 2011). As a SFBT counsellor, there are several assumptions that underpin my practice, including: the client is the “expert”; focus on the positive solutions; change is inevitable and constantly changing; no problems happen all the time; all individuals have strengths and resources; and, it is not necessary to access or diagnose the problem before being able to help (De Jong & Berg, 2012). Underpinning these assumptions is the theoretical approach of social constructionism (Nelson, 2010)

### 2.3.1 Social Constructionism

Social constructionism focuses on how knowledge is constructed and understood. The emphasis is on how people use language, social situations and groups to construct their understanding of the world (Andrews, 2012). The development of social constructionism cannot be tracked to a single origin. The last 20 years has seen primarily North American and British academics talk about social constructionism, however, the philosophical assumptions of social constructionism started about three hundred years ago (Burr, 2015). Social constructionism can be thought of as a theoretical orientation which has underpinned the ‘new wave’ or ‘new lens’ of social psychology approaches since the early 1980s (Bannink, 2007; Burr, 2015). The creators of SFBT were able to put forward the idea that reality is subjective and there are many realities, all equally correct (Bannink, 2007; De Jong & Berg, 2012). The assumptions deny that knowledge is a direct perception of reality, instead posing the idea that culture or society influences the way we process what is reality. All knowledge is therefore

constructed and influenced by looking at the world with a perspective developed from culture and/or society (Burr, 2015).

Language is viewed as one of the principal means by which we construct our social and psychological worlds. For example: some clients may use New Zealand slang terminology such as ‘cool’, ‘sick’, and ‘mean’ as positive adjectives because their social networks communicate with such words. A counsellor needs to be aware of language and adjust communication to fit the client’s social construct, so they can create meaning for themselves. With a social constructionist lens, the counsellor is able to take notice of what language, cultural and societal influences the client is discussing, and to take interest into why a client thinks in a certain way and how they construct meaning in their life. This naivety is useful for building rapport, developing a therapeutic alliance and co-constructing solutions (Burr, 2015) and supports a counsellor to work with clients with diverse backgrounds and beliefs (De Jong & Berg, 2001).

### 2.3.2 Structure of a Solution Focused Counselling Session

Utilising the key assumptions of SFBT outlined above, within the structure of a SFBT session there are several tools or techniques available to the counsellor to enable the client to see their preferred future or a life without the problem. Examples of SFBT tools include: exploring pre-session change, goals for a preferred future, scaling, asking the miracle question all of which might lead to setting of meaningful homework/ between session tasks, (Hanton, 2011). These techniques are outlined as follows, with examples of New Zealand practiced based counselling research, utilising SFBT tools and techniques e.g.:(Foster, 2017; Henson, 2015; Mulqueen, 2015; Tanner, 2016)

### 2.3.2.1 *Pre-session Change*

One of the principles guiding SFBT is the understanding that change is always happening (Hanton, 2011). Based upon reviews of empirical studies of outcome research, four key attributes of counselling are considered to have an impact on positive outcomes for clients (Lambert, 1992; Wampold, 2010). 40 per cent of positive outcomes is termed as extra-therapeutic change. The terminology of extra-therapeutic change relates to components in the life and environment of the client that affect the occurrence of change. For example, client supports, environment and their own resilience. To address these extra-therapeutic factors, SFBT offers the counsellor particular techniques that will help the client explore their own resourcefulness. Asking clients to describe their Preferred Future is one technique, another is asking clients to consider any pre-session change that may have occurred (prior to counselling) and to co-construct a meaningful Between Session Task (sometimes called homework task). The other three elements comprise of; 15 per cent of therapy effectiveness was attributed to technique or therapist orientation (for this research Solution Focused Brief Therapy), 15 per cent due to client expectancy that therapy will be helpful and engaging in the therapeutic process, 30 per cent attributed to a good, strong working relationship between counsellor and client (Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999; Lambert, 1992; Wampold, 2010).

SFBT counsellors will establish at the beginning of a session if anything has changed since the client made the appointment (Pre-Session Change) (Hanton, 2011). For example, *“Between now, the time of making your appointment, and the time we meet note down any differences which occur”* (Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995, p. 11). Pre-session change questions are deliberately vague to concentrate on their meanings to the client and what is important to them (Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995). These questions help the client to describe, to themselves, how they would like things to be in the future.

### 2.3.2.2 *Goals for a Preferred Future*

What does the client want more of in the future? Clear goals of the client's Preferred Future are fundamental for a counsellor to co-construct with the client (Macdonald, 2007). Goals provide a good way to measure how therapy is progressing and keeping alive the key notion that change is always happening. It is important for the client and counsellor to have a clear picture of when the problem is solved and therapy can conclude or address a different point (De Shazer et al., 1986). A large amount of time is spent establishing goals and fleshing out what it would be like without the problem around (Macdonald, 2007). A vivid image needs to be created for the client to notice when they have achieved (moments of) their Preferred Future. As Hanton, (2011) notes counsellors are working to encourage the client to focus on something else and not focus on the problem itself. Examples of goal-oriented questions include, "*What will you notice when the problem is better?*" or "*what will you be doing when you no longer have this problem around?*" or "*what will you be doing instead?*" or "*who will notice when the problem is not around*" (Macdonald, 2007, p. 17).

### 2.3.2.3 *Scaling*

Counsellors use scales to help clients construct their goals or preferred future into manageable steps. Scales are useful for starting conversations towards solutions and allowing the client to notice shifts towards their Preferred Future (Macdonald, 2007). Often, multiple scaling questions can be used in a session. Most counsellors introduce a scale, with reference to a perceived problem or a preferred future, between 0-10 or 1-10, however, some clients prefer to define their own scales (e.g. 1-1000 or 1-20) (Hanton, 2011). Introducing the scale enables the client to visualise the degree to which an issue may be affecting their life, and the confidence they have to change this. After the client identifies where on the scale they are currently, the counsellor is able to help the client shift perspective. An example of a scale-



based question is, *“So, you have mentioned that you would see moving up one more point on your scale when you were noticing that you had a bit more of an interest outside your home. Do you have any ideas of what you might do that could help towards that?”* (Hanton, 2011, p. 89).

#### 2.3.2.4 *Miracle Question*

When practicing SFBT, therapists see people as healthy, competent and having the skills to deal with whatever problems they perceive in their lives. However, the client may need an external person (e.g. a counsellor) to facilitate the co-creation of strategies or co-construct support they may need, to find their way to find and achieve their goals (Jones-Smith, 2011).

Clients can often struggle or become vague when talking about concrete goals. Therefore, often therapists will use questioning such as *“what will it be like when the problem is solved”* or *“how will your friend see you walking down the street when the problem is not around”*. On occasion, a technique called the miracle question is used to imagine life free of the problem. For example, *“You go to sleep and you wake up to perfect days, what is your day like, what are you doing?”* This creates a clear picture to the client and counsellor of what it will look like when the client has successfully found their solution (De Shazer et al., 1986).

Practiced-based research by a previous Master of Counselling researcher Foster (2017), looked at the miracle question and the researchers reflection on the experience of the process. With a sample of five students aged 15 to 18 years, the research found that using the miracle question enabled participants to notice the changes in their behaviour that would influence their preferred futures, and therefore supports the key SFBT principles that the client is the expert in their life (De Jong & Berg, 2012; Foster, 2017).

#### 2.3.2.5 *Exceptions to the Problem*

SFBT counsellors throughout counselling sessions will ask a series of exception questions around the client's preferred future. This will include questioning about times when the problem is not around or less severe (De Jong & Berg, 2012). With asking questions in this nature, a SFBT counsellor is able to demonstrate to the client that the problem is not always there, or sometimes problem is smaller. Talking in this way amplifies working for solutions for the client and not dwelling on the problem itself (De Jong & Berg, 2012; Hanton, 2011). Practiced based research by Henson (2015) looked at the exceptions in SFBT. The research was influenced by art therapy and thus, had an interest to combine exceptions and art. Findings from the practice-based research suggest that exceptions are a powerful SFBT tool for clients, and feedback from clients suggested that it was helpful for them. The research was explorative in its approach, and also demonstrates that drawing can be used for a way for a client express exceptions to the problem (Henson, 2015).

#### 2.3.2.6 *Summation Message or Feedback*

Towards the end of a session, a SFBT counsellor will provide feedback in the form of a summation message or feedback to the client. The SFBT counsellor will sometimes utilise a break of a couple of minutes during the concluding part of a SFBT session to gather thoughts and read over session notes, plan a feedback message and give the client some time to reflect on the session. After the break, the process of providing feedback should include exceptions that the counsellor has discovered throughout the session, emphasise the positives, reflect on the session and include ways forward. The period of feedback should not be too long (two to three minutes maximum), as otherwise it can become patronising for the client (De Jong & Berg, 2012; Hanton, 2011). Practiced-based research by Mulqueen (2015) looked at the summation message with three female participants within a counselling agency, with an age

range of 40-70 years. Findings suggest that the use of the SFBT summation message encouraged a deeper awareness about client resources covered within counselling session and feedback suggested that summation messages were a supportive and helpful addition to the therapeutic process. Having the summation message also enabled clients to develop clearer thinking, particularly with the reflective nature of a summation message providing insight for the client on what they were doing, what the client could do for themselves, and their next steps towards clarity of their situation (Mulqueen, 2015).

#### 2.3.2.7 *Between Session Tasks*

Most SFBT counsellors will set “homework” or “Between Session Tasks”. For SFBT counsellors, we expect to see some movement or shift towards a client’s Preferred Future between sessions of face-to-face counselling and setting a task or tasks with a client to work on throughout the week is helpful to continue that process out of the session (Hanton, 2011).

For young people, life can change hour-to-hour and the SFBT model with its homework tasks is very adaptive for use within the youth environment. Several questions can be asked to encourage the client to notice Between Session Task change when arranging a counselling session. For example, *“Between now and the next time we meet, pay attention to those times which are better, especially what is different about them and how they happen. Next time I would like you to describe those moments to me in detail”* (De Jong & Berg, 2012, p. 387). This provides the context for the beginning of any future session with a question that pre-supposes a change that is positive and in the direction that the client would like. For this reason, a *“what’s better since we last met?”* question is often used by practitioners to enquire about any changes (Hanton, 2011, p. 98). De Jong & Berg (2012) explains that the “what’s better?” question is fundamental as it reinforces that the counsellor is confident that the client is taking steps in the direction of what they have said they want to go in (De Jong & Berg, 2012).

Most literature on homework tasks comes from Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy [CBT] literature. A study by Detweiler-Bedell and Whisman (2005), which looked at a CBT approach of assigning homework tasks to clients, found that assigning tasks predicted better outcomes for clients suffering from depression than for clients who were not assigned homework tasks. Findings suggested that clients who were given written reminders of homework to take away from therapy; who were involved in the process of setting homework (collaboration); had clear concrete goals of therapy; and whom the therapist talked to about barriers to completing homework had better treatment outcomes.

One other aspect of homework tasks in SFBT is considering the way the tasks are discussed in future sessions. One concern is that if the counsellor raises the topic of homework task completion it might interrupt the working alliance (especially if the client has not completed the task or has only partially completed the task). However, we also need to be aware that if we completely ignore the Between Session Tasks, we can appear disinterested. Rather than making the homework task the focus of the session, Hanton (2011) recommends to either enquire during the session whether the task was useful or say nothing and see if it comes up in conversation. Alternatively, counsellors can set precedents in previous sessions where the client can bring up any reference to homework but the counsellor will not.

For a recent Masters of Counselling thesis, Tanner (2016) explored homework tasks as part of SFBT in a New Zealand high school. This qualitative research with four participants over five sessions each explored the clients' experiences of the co-construction process of Between Session Tasks. Tanner (2016) concluded that co-constructed conversations about Between Session Tasks were helpful from a client's perspective, as long as they were about the client's goals and aligned to what the client wanted. If the client suggested the task themselves this was the preference for the client, as opposed to the counsellor suggesting it. If

the client could not come up with a task, counsellor-suggested tasks were the next best option. Enquiry around how the client engaged with the tasks was also helpful for clients; again, the preference was if the client brought up the engagement themselves. This enquiry enabled useful information or feedback to the counsellor and was helpful for clients' therapy (Tanner, 2016). This research reminds us that client-centred processes are the preference for SFBT work and client-suggested Between Session Tasks too. In practice, a SFBT counsellor should actively and intently listen to what the client is suggesting themselves, rather than assuming a counsellor-initiated Between Session Task is preferable. It also demonstrates that clients find Between Session Tasks useful and suggests that more research into this aspect of SFBT practice is important.

### 2.3.3 SFBT with youth

I have noticed in my practice that the brief nature of SFBT appeals to young people. The brief nature allows young people to bring into the session what is front of their mind and finds some solutions quickly. Further, the brief nature is effective in educational settings for a number of reasons, including: being able to make a positive difference for students quickly; minimising time out of class; being cost effective; and maximising the amount of students that can be seen (Kelly, Kim, & Franklin, 2008). Such benefits are appealing to funders (e.g. Ministry of Education).

SFBT's emphasis on inviting clients to create their own vision of a Preferred Future relies less on the counsellor to do the work compared with problem-oriented approaches (e.g. person-centred approaches and cognitive behavioural approaches (De Jong & Berg, 2012). I have found that fundamental principles of the model appeal to youth. In my practice, I have noticed that youth enjoy that the focus of SFBT is on their meanings, their issues and their Preferred Futures. SFBT is very useful in enabling and empowering clients to make small manageable

shifts towards their preferred future (cognitively and/or behaviourally). Using a SFBT approach allows the practitioner to facilitate exploration of fundamental life skills for the client, these skills are expected to flow on to larger shifts with or without therapy (De Jong & Berg, 2012).

There have been a number of research articles that have explored the ways that SFBT has been effective in working with youth and the challenges they face, such as classroom-related issues and youth at risk. Kim and Franklin (2009) conducted a review of the literature on SFBT in the previous 10 years for behavioural and academic problems in schools in the United States. Seven studies were compared, and sample sizes ranged from seven to 86 students, from elementary school (aged 5-10 years), middle school (11-14 years), into high school (15-18 years). With such variation in samples, it is difficult to compare the studies. However, the overall review suggested that in several studies there was a component of exploring the externalising problem behaviours and this could suggest that SFBT may be a useful approach for behavioural problems with at-risk student populations in a school context. The review suggests that key advantages of SFBT with young people include that it can help create change in a short time period, which is important when young people's behaviours and problems are constantly changing. Further, SFBT allows for the young person and the therapist to collaborate on the goals. All of the studies shared a commonality that all data were collected under 'real world' conditions, as opposed to more clinical study findings applied to a school context.

Of particular interest was one of the studies reviewed, Franklin, Moore, and Hopson (2008), which evaluated the effectiveness of SFBT with students who have classroom-related behaviour problems. The criteria for a behavioural problem were students across both conditions that had received more than one behavioural referral from a classroom teacher. The study compared two intermediate schools (with students aged between 11 and 14 years old) in

the United States of a similar demographic and area, where one school was the experimental condition and one was a control condition. Over both conditions, a Youth Self-Report and Teacher Report Forms of the Child Behaviour Checklist teacher self-rated assessment were used to compare data between conditions in the form of pre-tests, post-tests, and a follow-up test (Franklin et al., 2008).

The control condition (one school) consisted of 29 students, made up of 25 males and four females. They did not receive any treatment, however, completed the two measures. The experimental condition (another school) consisted of 30 students, 15 males and 15 females whose teachers were trained in and used SFBT techniques in the classroom and discussed behavioural improvements within earshot of the students.

In comparing the results of the pre- and post-test between the two conditions, the scores on the experimental condition moved from scores in the clinically significant or problem ranges to the normal range. Concluding from the measures used, SFBT was effective in reducing classroom-related behavioural problems for both internal (e.g. self-worth and social anxiety) and external behaviour (e.g. violence and bullying) (Franklin et al., 2008). Somewhat challenging to conclude is what part or parts of this SFBT intervention had an impact on the participants (due to the four steps). However, it is a good demonstration of the underpinning of SFBT tools and techniques working for youth within a school context.

The majority of the literature covered so far in regard to SFBT literature has been based in the Western world. Although there is little literature by comparison, it appears that a SFBT approach is effective in the Eastern World, which is something to be mindful of with increasing numbers of people from Asia choosing to immigrate to Aotearoa. Shin (2009) looked at SFBT intervention for supporting Korean youth probationers to reduce their aggressiveness and increase their social adjustment. SFBT has been documented in a number of studies to work

well with mandated clients involved in the justice system (Shin, 2009). Some mandated clients can seem to present as unmotivated initially (as they have not chosen to engage themselves). SFBT works by intentionally and continuously reinforcing minor changes, which is very effective for unmotivated clients or mandated clients (De Jong & Berg, 2001; Shin, 2009). This research supports that a group therapy SFBT programme is an appropriate short-term intervention for Korean probation youth (Shin, 2009).

#### 2.3.4 Other noteworthy SFBT applications

There are a number of examples of successful SFBT approaches for working with clients with intellectual and/or learning disabilities (Roeden, Maaskant, Bannink, & Curfs, 2012; Smith, 2005). Using a case study approach, Smith (2011) described the elements that worked of a SFBT approach with someone with a mild learning difficulty who was referred to a clinical psychology service for ‘anger management’. Alterations to the approach suggested are to focus on one technique at a time and repeat if the technique is working. Smith (2005) found that adding multiple SFBT techniques can be overwhelming for some clients with mild learning difficulties. With the SFBT philosophy that only the minimum amount of intervention required in a person’s life should be undertaken, this case study reported that this would give the client agency and self-efficacy to commit, engage and to change behaviour when they were wanting to. Further, giving the client choice on the frequency, duration of sessions is further entrenching self-efficacy and client agency. As there are populations that are marginalised such as youth, people who have disabilities and people who suffer from mental illness, SFBT is considered to be helpful as it allows clients to be their own agents of change rather than the object of some other person’s choice (Smith, 2005).

SFBT has also been shown to be effective with people with more complex mental illnesses and/or alcohol dependency. Spilsbury (2012) reported on a case study of a 54-year-



old man with an alcohol dependency, depression and a personality disorder. The participant was provided with some medication (Acamprosate) to assist with abstinence from alcohol and Fluoxetine for depression. The participant was provided with three sessions of SFBT spaced at one-month intervals. During therapy the patient reported that he had abstained from alcohol. Using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale, his symptoms of depression reduced from severe to normal range and the participant reported a reduction in the frequency and intensity of dark thoughts that had previously plagued him when he had been previously sober. These improved outcomes were maintained 12 months following the SFBT sessions (Spilsbury, 2012). It is challenging to know definitively if the effects of the decrease of depressive systems are a result of the SFBT intervention or medication and abstinence from alcohol. However, it is encouraging to see a growth of literature showing effective SFBT interventions with more complex clients with co-morbid mental health issues.

In conclusion, SFBT has been demonstrated to be effective in addressing a range of issues, and with clients representing a range of demographics and age groups. SFBT is growing in popularity for a therapy approach for youth as demonstrated by a number of research studies (Franklin et al., 2008; Kim & Franklin, 2009; Shin, 2009). However, as will be outlined in the following section, New Zealanders in general have a poor help-seeking aptitude. A suggestion of E-therapy is therefore explored in this thesis as a potential way to increase youth accessibility to mental health practitioners.

## **2.4 Help Seeking**

Evidence suggests that young people are less likely than older adults (84 per cent) to recognise symptoms of anxiety or depression in themselves (73 per cent) (Hudson, Russell, &

Holland, 2017). This, in addition to poor help-seeking behaviours and barriers, means young people often do not seek, or receive, the support they need.

A Christchurch-based piece of New Zealand research analysed data collected on demographical information of clients of new clients who accessed at a counselling agency Petersgate (Manthei, 2012). The agency is one of the busiest agencies that provide counselling services in Christchurch and in 2009 counsellors saw approximately 1,500 new clients each year and conducted over 7,500 counselling sessions per annum. Demographical information suggests that females are a third more likely than males to present for counselling support with in Christchurch. Between 2006 and 2009, 37 per cent identified as male (1,236 new clients), 63 per cent identified as females (2,076 new clients). Further, demographical information within the same period suggest that under 20 year olds are the least likely to access support, with them representing just 9 per cent (303 new clients) compared to the largest user group (20- to 29 year olds) representing 28 per cent (922 new clients) (Manthei, 2012). These finding on age suggest that under 20-year olds are receiving the counselling support they require through school guidance services, and/or that cost is a barrier for this for this age demographic to accessing further counselling support.

There has been a growth in research exploring the help-seeking behaviour of young people. A study in a private Christian school in Australia of 137 students (Ciarrochi, Deane, Wilson, & Rickwood, 2002) found that adolescents low in emotional competence (ability to identify, describe, understand and manage emotions) were less likely to seek support from parents, friends, teachers and pastors, but were more likely to seek help from mental health professionals, a help line, or their doctor (Ciarrochi et al., 2002). Similarity Mariu, Merry, Robinson, and Watson (2012) found using data from the Youth 2000 study of 9699 students that young people are not likely to seek professional help for mental health issues. Researchers

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found that 82 per cent of students who had significant mental health problems had not sought help from a general practitioner. Looking at alternative ways to provide support to high students is thus paramount.

## **2.5 E-therapy Approaches**

Research carried out by Auckland University of Technology indicates in 2012, 86 per cent of the New Zealand population were using the internet in some capacity (AUT, 2012). A recent USA nationwide survey conducted in 2013 of 802 youth (aged 12-17) and their caregivers, indicated that 78 per cent of teenagers have a cell phone at their disposal, and almost half (47 per cent) of those people own smartphones. Almost one in four youth (23 per cent) have a tablet computer and 93 per cent of youth have a computer or have access to one at home (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Urs, 2013). The familiarity of such technology lends itself as a potential platform that clients may find more engaging and may enable them increased accessibility to therapeutic activities (Matthews, Doherty, Sharry, & Fitzpatrick, 2008).

A rise in the use of technology has seen the development of E-therapies. E-therapy offers individuals access to support that they need anywhere and anytime, and is available through several different platforms (web-chat, text message, online self-help, and smart phone applications). Young people may be encouraged to use E-therapies when presented through these platforms as they are often already familiar with them, and may find it easier to engage with than a face-to-face therapist. In addition, young people may be encouraged to seek help through such platforms as it is anonymous, especially so for people who prefer self-help or want help with sensitive topics (Khadjesari, Murray, Hewitt, Hartley, & Godfrey, 2011). E-therapy may also address barriers to help-seeking, especially for those in rural communities

who may not be able to travel to a face-to-face therapist. E-therapy can be provided by a number of mental health professionals. Increasingly psychologists, counsellors and psychiatrists are utilising technology to conduct therapy through online means (Cherry, 2017).

In the healthcare system, E-therapy is commonly used for appointment reminders, storing patient information, reminders to take medication and educational messages (Preziosa, Grassi, Gaggioli, & Riva, 2009). In New Zealand, in the majority of cases there is commonly a cost to see a health professional (GP, counsellor and psychiatrist) whether privately or partly subsidised through the public healthcare system, with some people choosing to de-prioritise their health because the cost is too large. Further, sometimes general practitioners are difficult to book into with large waiting lists or limited availability. To allow all New Zealanders access to primary health care services, medical professionals are also starting to utilise technology to support patients with their health. For example; in the media has been the launch of iMOKO™, an iPad application available to residents of the far North of New Zealand. Its mandate is to deliver high quality basic health services in underprivileged communities and to vulnerable children. The iMOKO™ team provide training to leaders in their community and schools on how to conduct a basic health assessment of common childhood health problems. Notes and photos can be uploaded to the iMOKO™ by the trained leaders. A doctor reviews all cases, can issue prescriptions for any medications (to the child and/or legal guardian) and advise on any follow-up care. This service has had a huge impact and as at October 2016, 4000 children from early childhood to secondary schools have utilised this technology. The iMOKO™ application can help people to get medical support a lot quicker. This is a promising application, and the use of technology to automate aspects of health services is one of the most effective ways to manage growing health costs and reducing health budgets (Navilluso Medical, 2016).

While it is fortunate that school-based health services are available free-of-charge to many young people in New Zealand, New Zealand media reports that a number of secondary schools have felt pressure to keep up with the increasing demands on school guidance counsellors, often having to take on lesser experienced intern students to help out with demand or pastoral staff having to provide training to allocate a peer support team of student leaders to provide basic pastoral support (Mcphee, 2017). E-therapy has potential to provide young people with counselling services, and to ease the pressure on school guidance services.

#### 2.5.1 Engagement and motivation to use E-therapies among youth

E-therapy approaches have increased in their popularity and a number of studies have demonstrated high engagement and interest in moving traditional face-to-face pursuits online (Glasheen & Campbell, 2009; Navilluso Medical, 2016). Research into young persons' experiences of E-therapy has been carried out by Gibson and Cartwright (2014), who looked at the motivations and experiences of young people who were using the internet-based, Kids-Line 24-hour support service for counselling in Australia. Participants felt the main benefits of online counselling were that they felt more privacy and emotionally safe, whereas, with face-to-face counselling or telephone counselling they felt more emotionally vulnerable. When asked to reflect on negative outcomes of online counselling, the focus groups described time restraints, feeling rushed to conclude and long wait times for therapy, in some cases clients reported having to wait for three hours on hold in order to be transferred to a telephone counsellor. Participants reported that online chat counselling, email or text counselling was the least confronting therapy approach when compared to traditional forms of counselling (face-to-face therapy or phone counselling). This is a consistent finding with other research identifying young peoples' preference for support from informal sources (Collin et al., 2011). Further, participants felt a certain amount of anonymity and less judgement (e.g. "if I talk to

them in person the counsellor will think I'm weird'''). The anonymity felt by young people is a key strength in the use of E-therapies.

A recent study by Glasheen et al. (2015) looked at 215 secondary school students (103 males and 112 females) in Australia from five government and two non-government schools in South East Queensland. An online survey consisting of 36 questions was conducted during class time. Several survey questions asked students whether they would use online counselling if it was offered within the high school. Over 80 per cent of students indicated they would or might use online counselling. Interestingly however, 18 per cent of students reported they would not use online counselling if it was available. While there was no significant difference in gender in intention to use online counselling at school, almost half of the females (48.6 per cent) who completed the survey had previous face-to-face counselling at school compared with less than one quarter of the male students (21.6 per cent). This finding suggests that offering online counselling may break the ice and open the door to males who would not usually access services.

A major limitation with this research was that it was about the intention of using online counselling, rather than the school trialling an online counselling service and asking for feedback by way of a survey. Intention is different from actual use of the service. Interestingly, in the comparison to face-to-face counselling, findings from Glasheen et al. (2015) suggest that if students were to use online counselling services they were more likely to want to discuss personal and sensitive concerns such as sexuality. This is because they would feel more comfortable and feel more anonymous. In contrast, students appeared to want to be physically present with the school counsellor to discuss their career plans and not over online counselling services. This research is interesting, as it appears that discussing topics that young people

think are embarrassing are less likely to occur in a face-to-face counsellor session than through online counselling.

#### *2.5.1.1 Examples of E-therapy applications with youth*

Increasingly, in New Zealand, E-therapy is being utilised in the counselling context through platforms such as online self-help (e.g. Common Ground), mental health online games (e.g. SPARX), online chat, email and text counselling (e.g. Youthline) (Haxell, 2014). Given the popularity of these forms of therapy, focus is turning to the use of E-therapy for aftercare of patients or additional therapy by some mental health professionals (Preziosa et al., 2009).

With a Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy [CBT] approach, Matthews et al. (2008) looked at using a mobile phone as a platform for engaging youth in therapeutic activities. Specifically, researchers used mood charting, which involves clients recording their moods in some way, at regular intervals to help identify contributing factors to their emotional state and behaviours. With this process, it can help bring forward symptoms, behaviours, feelings and provide the practitioner an overview of the emotional state of clients during their lives outside of counselling sessions. Further, mood charting can get quite complex with integrating how much medication a client has taken, energy levels and amount of sleep. These all help the practitioner to get a holistic image of what is going on for the client between sessions, and enables the practitioner to tailor future sessions to what will be most beneficial to cover in future face-to-face counselling sessions. Traditionally, mood charting has been a pen and paper affair, however, studies indicate that these have a very low compliance rate with youth, completed retrospectively (thus, less relevant) and issues with confidentiality (e.g. someone looking over your shoulder or picking up the piece of paper that is lying on the kitchen table). Further, clients and/or counsellors, must go to great lengths to keep their information safe (e.g. by locking the chart in a draw or filing cabinet for example.)

Increasingly, electronic forms of the mood charting have been completed in the form of an electronic diary. A number of benefits are confidentiality with password protection, familiarity of mode of presentation for youth (e.g. presented on an iPad, as opposed to pen and paper), log time of day of the mood charting and potentially can transmit information securely to the practitioner prior to a session to review, plan and prepare. Matthews et al. (2008) found that using text-based therapeutic support as the approach is more accessible and young people are more likely to respond (Matthews et al., 2008).

Unfortunately, counsellors occasionally must deal with situations that are difficult in nature. Potential situations such as suicidal ideation, child abuse, and intimate partner violence (Karakurt et al., 2014). These are particularly difficult to address over text message and other technologies, and some concern is raised around E-therapies over face-to-face E-therapies. I turn to these concerns in the next section.

### 2.5.2 Critiques of E-therapies

Despite the many benefits of E-therapies, concerns have been expressed around the confidentiality (e.g. keeping cell-phone numbers and content confidential), risk and safety of such therapies (Hanley & Reynolds, 2009). There is also concern that technology can expose young people to explicit material (e.g. pornography, violence), and cyber-bullying and sexting are increasingly common. However, this concern is with the platform that the therapy is provided across and not a critique of e-therapy itself. For example, the same risks are present for young people in using the internet to research for a school assignment (Netsafe.org.nz, 2017). Critics have also challenged the online practice because “relationships cannot reach sufficient levels of intimacy” (Hanley & Reynolds, 2009, p. 5). To mitigate this, when offering E-therapies, counsellors need to be aware of missing verbal cues, increased opportunity for miscommunication and inability to intervene when there is a crisis (Hanley & Reynolds, 2009).



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Whilst these concerns are valid, they must be weighed up with the powerful nature of the tool for engagement, anonymity, time and opening doors for clients to seek support who were otherwise afraid or ashamed to do so.

## **2.6 Summary of the literature review**

This literature review has looked at the poor mental health of New Zealanders and the increasing demand on school guidance services. The review has looked at Social Constructionism and Solution Focused principles and tools that underpin the researcher's framework to counselling. Examples have been given of research that highlights positive outcomes of Solution Focused counselling for youth and the need to explore the use of alternative ways to offer mental health services, namely, E-therapy.

Key ethical documents such as the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors and the New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) are starting to accommodate E-therapies. SFBT is predominantly a face-to-face method of counselling. However, communication in the twenty-first century environment has changed dramatically since Steve and Insoo developed the SFBT model in the 1980's. Internet, text message, and social media platforms are increasingly commonplace and are everyday parts of the lives of our youth.

Many health disciplines in New Zealand (e.g. nursing, doctors, public health, psychology, counselling) are attempting to integrate technology into communication with their clients or patients. Counselling is no different with a push to explore ways to utilise E-therapy. This literature review has revealed that there are several strengths of a move in this direction, including accessibility, a familiar form of communication for young people, cost saving and reach. However, there are also concerns amongst counsellors, such as confidentiality, risk, safety and impacts on the counselling relationship. This research will look at a 'happy medium',

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an explorative solution to provide the strengths of E-therapy and mitigate many of the concerns for counsellors.

The research is an explorative study to investigate a combination of traditional face-to-face counselling (with a SFBT approach), and co-constructed text messages for clients' Between Session Tasks. This will extend the limited range of practice-based research and evidence on Solution Focused counselling in a New Zealand secondary school setting. In exploring the potential value of combining traditional face-to-face counselling techniques with between session text messages with young people, findings and implications will be considered not only for my own counselling practice but for other practitioners as well.

### **3 Methodologies**

Qualitative research allows the perspectives of clients or patients to be heard, and offers rich and compelling insight. This chapter will explore the methodological approaches that were considered for this research: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Case Study Analysis, and Thematic Analysis. These approaches were considered in order to ascertain the most useful approach for addressing the aims of the current research. The summary of the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the pros and cons of the three approaches considered and the qualitative approach taken for this research.

#### **3.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a relatively new approach to qualitative data collection and has been gaining momentum over the past 10-15 years (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011; Smith, 2011). IPA originates from phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, influenced by the belief that humans interpret and understand the world by re-formulating individual stories into a form that makes sense to them (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Chapman & Smith, 2002). IPA involves a highly intensive and detailed analysis of the accounts produced by a small number of participants. Data are usually collected aurally and in the form of a semi-structured interview/s or focus group/s. IPA involves a two-stage interpretation process 1) phenomenological inquiry and 2) interpretative analysis (Pringle et al., 2011). The phenomenological requirement purpose is to understand and ‘give voice’ to the concerns of participants (Larkin et al., 2006). This inquiry focuses on an in-depth examination around three areas; lived experience, the meaning of that lived experience and how to make sense of that experience (Chapman & Smith, 2002).

The aim of IPA is to explore in detail the processes through which participants make sense of their own experiences, by looking at the participants' account of the experiences that lead to their thought processes (Chapman & Smith, 2002; Larkin et al., 2006). Given that I hoped to gain some understanding of my client's experience of an 'intervention', I considered that IPA was an appropriate approach for my research project. Furthermore, once all the data are collected, Interpretative Analysis allows the researcher to contextualise and organise the data a reflective and questioning way. I was particularly interested in the assertion that IPA usually presents the complete data in the form of a Thematic Analysis to display the patterns of meaning in the data (Larkin et al., 2006).

### 3.1.1 Strengths and Limitations of IPA

A strength of IPA is that the approach gives a complete and in-depth account from the point of view of the individual. It enables the reader to hear and understand the experiences of participants (Pringle et al., 2011). In contrast to Thematic Analysis or Case Study Analysis where the researcher decides what information to include or exclude, IPA gives a voice to the participant with the primary goal to try to understand their world, and to describe 'what it is like' (Larkin et al., 2006). This leads to a focus on the participant's experiences of a specific event, process or relationship. However, you cannot ever achieve a genuinely first-person account as the researcher constructs the write up of the research. Therefore, keeping a consistent IPA stance throughout can be challenging (Larkin et al., 2006).

As with so many qualitative methods, including Thematic Analysis or Case Study Analysis, IPA can be easy to do badly, and difficult to do well as it demands that a number of rather testing 'balancing acts' are maintained by the researcher. Within health psychology, for example, many IPA studies have tended to be over-cautious, or at least to be too easily satisfied with a 'first-order' analysis (Larkin et al., 2006).

When applied to SFBT, IPA gives a voice to the participants; however, IPA appears to be contrary to some of the core beliefs of SFBT, especially as IPA provides an individualistic account, as opposed to the social constructionist philosophy that SFBT is grounded in. Drawing on Chapman and Smith (2002); Larkin et al. (2006) in the Interpretive Analysis section, an IPA framework fits with research with a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Approach (CBT), where the goal of the short-term psychotherapy is directed toward solving current problems and modifying dysfunctional thinking and behaviour (Beck, 2011). For a CBT type of approach, you are required to delve into a 'problem focus' to be able to explore a participant's experiences.

### **3.2 Case Study Analysis**

Case study research is utilised in several disciplines including: anthropology, social sciences, education, health sciences, and health professions (McLeod, 2010, p. 1; Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). Case studies can contribute to our knowledge of an individual, group, community, social or political learning (Yin, 2014). Often there is a misunderstanding about what a case study is and how powerful the approach can be to inform best practice and decision-making in clinical or policy contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies can be 'simpler to follow' or 'more realistic' than other designs such as Interpretive Analysis or Thematic Analysis, due to the closeness to data and in-depth examination of the data (Mills et al., 2010). Most case study research projects focus on the natural progression a number of cases each of which is written about individually (McLeod, 2010). The final research document includes considerable detail about individual factors that may contribute to change. Given that many counsellors write case notes about clients as common practice, case study research is considered to be appropriate for counselling research (McLeod, 2010).

Case studies are subject to a number of verification processes to achieve rigour and trustworthiness to become scientific evidence. In qualitative research, it has been argued that their validity should be based on their 'trustworthiness', rather than their truth or value (Sandelowski, 1993). Strategies for achieving trustworthiness (used interchangeably with 'rigour') in qualitative research were developed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These were considered to be equivalent in rigour to the constructs internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity that are used in quantitative research. These constructs are still in use today in qualitative research, however additional strategies of achieving rigour in qualitative research have been suggested, including prolonged engagement, observation, thick description, triangulation, development of a coding system and inter-rater reliability, researcher bias, negative case analysis, peer review debriefing, member checking, and external audits (Morse, 2015).

### 3.2.1 Strengths and Limitations of Case Study Analysis

Initially, writing a case study itself for a researcher can seem an 'easier option' to other qualitative approaches (e.g. Interpretive Analysis or Thematic Analysis), as you are literally reporting on the case that was presented in a systematic nature from the discipline you represent (e.g. counselling, psychology, or education). Potentially, this is one of the reasons why a case study is often an obvious option for students and new researchers. However, like most qualitative approaches including Interpretive Analysis or Thematic Analysis, the approach can lack rigour.

Another challenge of the case study approach is to lift the research from a descriptive account of 'what happened' within the research to a piece of research that can lay claim to

being worthwhile (Rowley, 2002). The process can be more challenging than initially thought to figure out what information is worthy of making inferences to lead to a better understanding. The challenge for a case study researcher is to interpret the case study information, decide what the information means and what information should be included or left out in the analysis (S. McLeod, 2010).

Similarly, with many qualitative approaches including Interpretive Analysis or Thematic Analysis, you can very rarely generalise case study data as the sample is usually only relevant to a phenomenon (e.g. sample of students within a guidance department or sample of patients within a cardiology department). The analysis and interpretation of case studies are most often intended to lead to a better understanding, testing of theories or identifying areas that require subsequent investigation (Mills et al., 2010).

A case study approach creates knowledge and can be used to assist in the development and creation or amendment of policy. Within medicine, education, psychology, and counselling case studies provide professional development opportunities of a 'real life' scenarios of situations that could arise. Case studies allow health professionals to reconstruct a major episode, accident, trauma or event in a client or patient's life. (Mills et al., 2010).

A case study approach allows some fluidity in the research process and occasionally some matters arise that were not in the researcher's original goals (Mills et al., 2010). Most counsellors read many case studies during training and personal development opportunities. Thus, most health professionals are continually learning by case study research in some way (McLeod & Elliott, 2011).

With a small sample, another challenge for a researcher using a case study approach is to provide enough detail to maintain anonymity for the participants and to provide sufficient validity to the research (Mills et al., 2010).

These factors were considered during the development stage of my research and I decided to find a different approach to guide my data collection and analysis. While not strictly a research methodology, since thematic analysis is referred to in this section, and was used in my data analysis, I will include a section describing this here. A full account of the manner in which I used a thematic analysis approach will appear in the method chapter.

### **3.3 Thematic Analysis**

Thematic Analysis is widely used within qualitative research, for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research and a vast amount of research within counselling now uses a Thematic Analysis approach (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Thematic Analysis provides a flexible approach, which provides a rich, detailed and accurate representation of complex data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A Thematic Analysis approach requires a heavy involvement and interpretation from the researcher, with the focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, in the form of themes. It is suggested that adding a research diary can be useful to note down any body language cues to a Thematic Analysis. Opdenakker (2006) comments face-to-face conversations can provide a counsellor with vivid information, beyond what is voiced in a recording.

To analyse the data, a coding process takes place. This involves recognising important moments in the research (seeing the moments as something noteworthy for the research)



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(Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A comprehensive code is one that captures the qualitative richness from the participant. A systematic encoding of the information organises the data from which themes can be developed. (Boyatzis, 1998).

Creswell's annotated analysis (2013, pp.197-200) outlines the steps that should inform a Qualitative Thematic Analysis approach, including Step One: *Organise the data*; Step Two: *Read or look at the data*; Step Three: *Coding the data*; Step Four: *Description of the setting*; Step Five: *Expand further*; and, Step Six: *Interpretation of the research*.

### 3.3.1 Strengths and Limitations of Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is fluid in its approach and allows a theme to be created as they present in the data. Thematic analysis organises and describes your data set in rich detail (Guest et al., 2012). It is important to be thorough and forthright about the approach taken to the thematic analysis. If the reader does not know how the researcher went about analysing the data, or what assumptions informed their analysis, it is difficult for the examiner or reader to evaluate research. Further, it is difficult for the researcher to compare and/or contrast with other literature (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Clarity on process and practice of method is vital (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Reliability can be a challenge to obtain with Thematic Analysis design. There is a vast amount of interpretation that is passed to the researcher into defining the data items (codes) as well as applying the codes to chunks of text (Guest et al., 2012). With a Thematic Analysis completed poorly, it can be a challenge for the reader to follow the researcher's analysis, assumptions and conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic Analysis has been criticised for not being sophisticated enough for some projects. There is a misconception from researchers that thematic analysis is only a descriptive or positivist method that requires no interpretative analysis. (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

### **3.4 Summary of methodologies**

Consideration of the most appropriate method for data analysis was undertaken for this research. The process for selecting the most appropriate methodology took time, thought, and full immersion in the data, in addition to reading literature, and trial/error with the data presented. The influencing researching analyses for this study were Case Study Analysis, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Thematic analysis.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was considered as a way to present the data, however, the approach was dismissed due to the conflicting individualistic ideas with those of the social constructionist grounding of SFBT, it appeared that the IPA model did not fit easily with the data. Employing a case study approach however enabled me focus on each of the cases. A thematic analysis was then used to describe the themes that arose in the case studies, enabling a greater amount of data to be presented than would have been in a case study. In particular, although I acknowledge the limitations associated with my interpretations, thematic analysis gave more voice to the clients regarding the Between Session Tasks.

## **4 Method**

This research was conducted in a New Zealand Co-Educational secondary school, where I was an intern counsellor. The high school has not been named to protect both the participants' and school's anonymity<sup>1</sup>. This chapter outlines the research process.

### **4.1 Recruitment**

Recruitment for this research was open to students from Year 11 (approximately 15 years of age) to Year 13 (approximately 17 years of age). As outlined in the ethical considerations, participation was not open to students who were already engaged in counselling with me. Additional pre-requisites to participating in the research were that participants had access to a mobile phone, and had parental/caregiver consent. The recruitment process is outlined in the subsequent sections, and is summarised in Figure 1 (refer to page 41).

#### **4.1.1 Recruitment Email**

Recruitment was via an email that was sent out to all Year 11, 12 and 13 students using the internal school email system, stage one Figure 1 (refer to page 41). Embedded in the email was the research recruitment poster (refer to appendix \_) that was approved by University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee (HEC). Within one week of sending out the email, 16

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<sup>1</sup> When talking about terminology, I have used the term of 'students' to identify people who attend the high school or have attended the expression of interest appointment. Once the student has returned the consent forms they become a 'participant'. Occasionally, I may use the term 'client', when I am talking about my everyday practice or comparisons with research and everyday practice (e.g. non-client load).

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students (n = two males, 14 females) expressed interest in taking part in the research stage two on figure 1 (refer to page 41). An acknowledgement email was sent to these students, along with an appointment for the student to attend a 30-minute consultation to find out about the research and to be given the appropriate documentation (refer to appendix four).

#### 4.1.2 Initial Consultation: Expression of Interest appointment

Each student had a 30-minute consultation stage three on figure 1 (refer to page 41). The students were given both an oral and written description (refer to appendix four) of what the research involved. Seven of the 16 interested students had attended counselling before (although, as mentioned, none was a client of mine), and thus had some understanding of the counselling process itself. Participants were informed about both the procedure for withdrawal from, and the procedure for complaints about the research. Participants were also assured, in their initial consultation, that their participation in the research would not inhibit their access to the school guidance counsellors during the course of the research, or in the future.

Following the initial consultations, six students, who did not meet the criteria to participate in the research, were offered alternative support. The reasons that these participants were excluded from the research included; a student wanting a support person to be present (challenging for ethics and text messages); a student who was already engaged with another counsellor; a student who did not want to seek their parent's consent; one who misunderstood the research requirements; and two students with significant trauma.

#### 4.1.3 Consent Forms

Students were also given a consent form for themselves and one to take home for their parents/guardians. The first five participants who returned the consent forms were recruited for the research, stage four on figure 1 (refer to page 41).



*Figure 1.* Summary of the recruitment process

## **4.2 Participants**

The sample initially included one Year 11 female, two Year 12 females, one Year 12 male and one Year 13 female. Four out of five participants had attended counselling before. While all five commenced the research, only four participants completed the research from beginning to end. The fifth participant was encouraged to leave the research for safety reasons and all of their data was omitted from the research.

## **4.3 Procedure**

Figure 2 outlines the research procedure in its entirety, for each of the participants (including the participant who was later omitted from the research). Each participant ( $n = 4$ ) engaged in four sessions of Solution Focused counselling. One participant started a week prior to the others to ensure that the research procedure ran smoothly, and that any unforeseen procedural issues could be addressed.

Sessions were conducted as close to a traditional session format as possible. That is, traditional procedure would be followed in conducting a SFBT session. It was acknowledged that the session was going to be recorded and the participant was invited to let the researcher know if at any point they wanted the Dictaphone to be turned off. The key difference to my traditional face-to-face counselling, was that I encouraged the development of a co-constructed

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text message(s) that could be sent, by me, to the participant between sessions. This procedure is outlined in the subsequent paragraphs, and in Figure 2 on the proceeding page 43.

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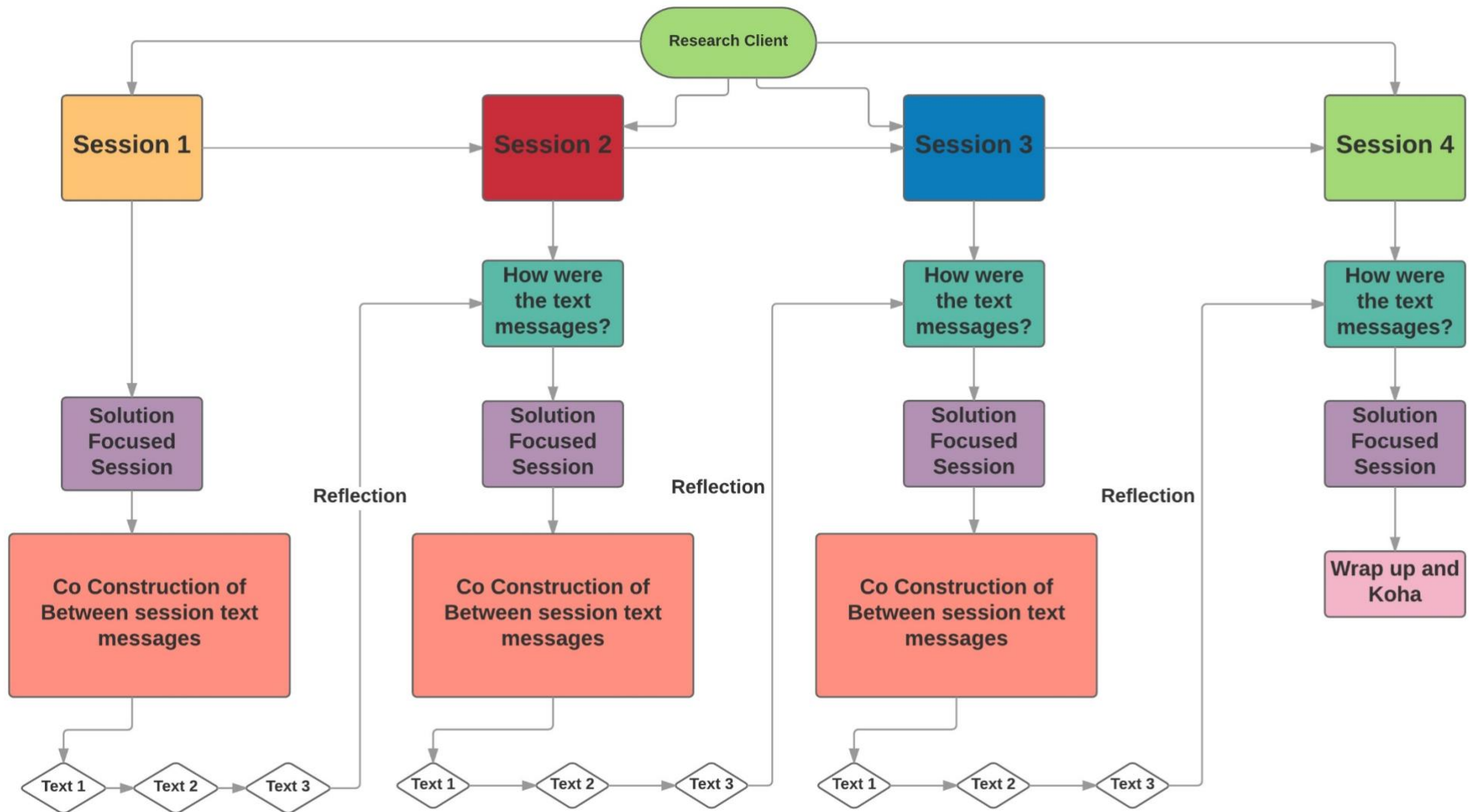


Figure 2. Summary of the research process each participant followed.

#### 4.3.1 Solution Focused Session

As outlined in the literature review, there are several key elements that make up a Solution Focused counselling session, including pre-session change, scaling questions, definition of preferred future, the miracle question, externalising the problems, and setting Between Session Tasks (refer to section refer 2.3.2.7). The structure of a SFBT session is further described in the appendices section (refer to appendix one and two). A counsellor would not usually use all of these during a counselling session, but would regard these as more of a 'tool box' of Solution Focused Tools to draw from. Of particular interest for this research was the way in which Between Session Tasks were constructed and addressed by the participant and counsellor. The Between Session Tasks adopted for the research was different from that used in a traditional solution focused approach and is explained below.

#### 4.3.2 Between Session Tasks

Traditionally, Between Session Tasks are co-constructed at the end of a SFBT session. This usually means that the counsellor uses some of the client language to affirm their goals and construct a suggested task that is intended to help the client have a tangible activity or thought to work on between sessions (refer to section 2.3.2.7). The adaption for this research was that, as part of this task the participant and I co-constructed the content of a text message that could be sent to them to help them remember, or consider acting on the agreed task. In order to increase the participant's agency in completing the task we also discussed and decided on the time of day and the frequency of text messages per week to be sent by me to them between sessions. Approximately 10 minutes were put aside during the end of the session for the co-construction of the between session text messages. The number of text messages to be sent by the researcher throughout the week was decided by the participant. For example, I



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would ask “How many text messages would you like this week?”. Most participants preferred three text messages over a five-day period (noting that text messages were not sent during weekends).

#### 4.3.3 What’s Better Question

Traditionally during the subsequent counselling session, the counsellor asks the client the ‘What’s Better?’ question. The purpose of this question is to encourage the client to reflect on positive aspects of life that the client has experienced since their last counselling session (refer to section 2.3.2.7). However, for this research, the purpose was primarily for feedback. Approximately 10 minutes into the subsequent session the participants were asked the ‘What’s Better?’ question and also which text messages they preferred. For example, I would ask “*You received some text messages through the week, were there any text messages which were helpful and why were they helpful to you?*”

This process allowed me to hear whether the participant had integrated any aspects of the Between Session Change task and whether or not the text messages were deemed helpful by the participant. If during this enquiry it was found that certain text messages were more helpful than others, this feedback would inform the next Between Session Task and text message co-construction at the end of the session.

#### 4.3.4 Data Collection

All face-to-face sessions were recorded on a Dictaphone. Although, for the research, the relevant parts of the session were the beginning and end, that is, the ‘what’s better?’ part and the co-construction of a Between Session Task and text message, the whole session was recorded to minimise the distracting nature of turning off the recording device partway through

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the session. A Dictaphone was chosen over video as it was more discrete and less distracting to the participants. Relevant parts of each session were later transcribed. Any observations made around a participant's body language were also noted down in a research diary at the conclusion of the session.

#### 4.3.5 Text message delivery

Text messages were sent from a cell phone that was bought for the duration of the research, from a phone number discrete from my own personal phone number. The discrete phone number was disconnected when the research concluded. Every participant had a different homework/ Between Session Task and the content of text messages varied. The text messages were phrased as one-way interaction and there was no expectation for a participant to reply. The text messages were brief and phrased to address each participant in a manner that they suggested would be helpful. The text messages sent have been included in the results section.

#### 4.3.6 Koha and wrap up

At the end of the research process (after participants had participated in four sessions), participants received a koha (the Māori term for 'gift') of two movie vouchers each for taking part. Participants, guardians and representatives at the school (Head of Guidance and the Principal) were offered a research summary upon the conclusion of the research.

### 4.4 Data Analysis

I engaged a process of thematic data analysis and sought constructive critique from my supervisors. This process allowed for consistency in the method but failed to provide multiple perspectives from a variety of people with differing expertise. When using this method for

another research, the coding of data could involve several individuals with themes being developed using discussions with other researchers, a panel of experts, and/or the participants themselves (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This was not practicable for this research.

The following steps, suggested by Creswell (2013), were used to develop my Thematic Analysis.

- **Step one - Organise the data:** I listened to the interview in its entirety and made transcripts of the relevant parts of the interview.
- **Step two - Read or look at the data:** I spent approximately a week fully immersing myself in the rich data that was created, by listening to the recordings of each session twice. No writing happened in this time, however, this was an important process for me to do in order to engage in a holistic and in-depth research view.
- **Step three - Coding the data:** To code data, transcripts were made of relevant parts of the interview (i.e. the beginning and end of each session when feedback was sought, and text messages were co-constructed). I then printed these out and wrote observations in the margins. Specifically, I followed Creswell's (2013) suggestions of: reading the transcripts carefully; writing thoughts in the margins; making a list of topics, refining the list and finding the correct wording that adequately describes the themes presented. The parts of the interview that were selected for transcription and coding were any parts of the research session that related to the 'what's better?' question and the Between Session Task question. This was a relatively easy distinction as the participants were expecting to provide feedback at the beginning of the session and a co-construction of Between Session Tasks at the end of the session.

- **Step four - Description of the setting:** I considered the following aspects and their potential to have an influence on the themes that emerged from the data:
  - Season
    - As the research was conducted during the winter months, it may have an effect on counselling attendance, with the weather being an incentive to be inside in the warmth rather than participation in outdoor activities (e.g. rugby) that foster positive wellbeing.
    - Grey, cold or overcast days potentially can cause a decrease in mood and wellbeing.
  - Research took place around the time of exams
    - This is a time of heightened stress around the school.
    - Participants' interest in coming to counselling was high (heightened stress, may have been a factor)
  - Holidays
    - Part way through the research was the third term holiday. This could have a number of effects and engagement in counselling a week before the holidays was low.
    - Between session text message reminders stopped during the holidays and relevancy decreased after a longer time between sessions. Further, it was challenging for the participant to reflect on BSC text messages post holidays.
  - School Guidance department
    - Research sessions took place within a Secondary School Guidance department. There are potentially different levels of disclosure (opposed to private practice) due to the fact that it is not external agency to the school.

- Earthquakes
  - Although the number of participants was small, some participants came from families who had shifted their place of living as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes and Christchurch's rebuild.
  - It was possible that there was a heightened stress or awareness of surroundings.
  - Acknowledgement that the stigma around accessing counselling is changing as people deal with the Christchurch earthquake recovery. It is potentially becoming easier for students to come forward to access counselling support if required.
- Between session text message
  - Acknowledgement that there was no control of the setting or mood when the participant received their between session text messages.
- **Step Five - Expand further:** I advanced the description of themes through writing about each and included transcripts that appeared to exemplify the theme. I also explored subthemes, revisited transcription excerpts and examined possible interconnecting themes.
- **Step Six - Interpretation of Research:** I summarised the findings in relation to literature, considered how any of this material might affect my practice, and considered future developments for others in the counselling profession (this informed the majority of the discussion).

#### 4.5 Ethical considerations

In a project in which counselling, research and young people are combined, several ethical concerns need to be addressed. The research was approved by the University of

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Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee and complied with the guidelines for research expressed in the New Zealand Association of Counsellors' (NZAC) Code of Ethics. Key areas of concern were to 'first do no harm' by being sensitive to participant rights to be treated with respect for their anonymity and confidentiality and to feel safe within the research.

#### 4.5.1 Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity

Due to the logistics of undertaking research within a school there was a small risk to the anonymity of the participant. There were several steps taken to ensure this risk was minimal including: withholding the identity of participants from my supervisors; using password protected files; storing identifying information on separate documents; using pseudonyms and blanking out identifying information on publications and appendices.

All research-related computer files (e.g. transcripts and thesis drafts) were stored within a password-protected electronic file and backed up onto a University of Canterbury server. All recordings of the sessions were also destroyed once they had been transcribed. All consent forms were also scanned to the secure computer files, and then the hardcopies were destroyed.

#### 4.5.2 Managing participants who express safety concerns within the research

In this research, I needed to consider how to support any participants who expressed safety concerns during the research, and the following procedure was put in place. First, I would prioritise counselling before and during the research. Second, I would establish a research risk management plan that would follow the standard counselling procedure under the guidelines of the NZAC. That is, if a participant presented any safety risk to themselves or others, I had an obligation to act and discontinue the research process and offer the appropriate alternative support.

In a face-to-face session, the school guidance department offered support to me as an intern counsellor to construct an action plan for any at-risk participants, which included having another counsellor involved to keep the participant at the centre of the process. The likely action for any medium- to high-risk participants would have been to refer the participant to a local mental health service. While in the rare, extreme case, it would have been to take the participant to hospital or to call an ambulance. Neither of these actions were needed for this research. As noted above, one of the five participants was omitted from this research because they were encouraged to leave for safety reasons. With a risk assessment, they were considered low-risk as per risk management plan, and information on helplines was sent to the participant and they were referred to another counsellor.

By contrast, an alternative risk management plan was needed to support participants between sessions. In this research, text messages were sent to participants to remind them of the Between Session Task(s) that they set themselves. To minimise the risk of these text messages sparking negative thoughts, the text messages were co-constructed with the participant to ensure that they were helpful and focused on reminding the participant of what they wanted more of.

Participants were asked not to reply to the text messages, and the text messages were phrased to limit participants' need to reply. However, for safety reasons the cell phone used to text participants was reviewed throughout the day in case a participant did text back. If a participant did text back with any concerning thoughts around safety, they would have been referred to Youthline's free text service, and also followed up with a face-to-face counselling session with another counsellor. This was the case with one participant, who received the outlined support and was immediately omitted from the research as a risk assessment was performed by another counsellor.

Additional ethical considerations outlined by the NZAC were followed to further minimise risk to the participants (As outlined in the NZAC Code of ethics):

*“Counsellors shall take all reasonable steps to protect participants from harm”*

*(New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2016, p. 4).*

This was addressed by following procedures: omitting participants from research and following up with appropriate support if any safety risks were mentioned (as mentioned in above paragraph); informing participants of the confidentiality agreement and exceptions to confidentiality (e.g. safety of themselves or others); and utilisation of internal/external supervision as required.

#### 4.5.3 The ethics of recruitment

As the context of this research was my internship, I had to consider whether it was ethical to recruit students from my counselling database. In order to avoid the potential for clients to feel obliged to participate, I followed the following steps for recruitment. First, research participants were recruited via email and this email excluded students who I had already seen in face-to-face counselling sessions. Second, in order to minimise any coercion, all participants were asked to volunteer themselves for the research. Further, the initial consultation (refer to section 4.1.2) with interested participants only discussed the content and process of the research, and I avoided any leading questions or comments that may have made them feel obliged to participate. For example, it would have been inappropriate to say, “I look forward to having you take part in this research”.



#### 4.5.4 The ethics of informed consent

*“Counsellors shall provide services to clients in the context of free and informed consent. Informed implies understanding and free consent implies a lack of pressure. Counsellors shall respect clients’ rights to refuse or withdraw consent at any time”*(New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2016, p. 5)

This research took part in a New Zealand secondary school. This meant that the research was bound by a number of additional policies for conducting research within school property. The School had a policy where any student (regardless of age) was required to obtain parent/caregiver consent to take part. This is fairly standard for conducting research within a school. Therefore, gaining consent was another key ethical concern, especially as participation identified that the student was engaging in counselling. It is not standard practice within secondary school counselling departments to gain parental/caregiver consent for students to attend counselling.

In order to provide information in a respectful manner, information/consent sheets were distributed in a non-confronting way and potential participants were given time to take the form home (as opposed to asking to students to sign the consent form during the session). During the expression of interest appointment consultation (refer to section 4.1.2), I discussed with the student whether it was appropriate to send a letter and consent form home, as I needed to ensure there were no concerns for the student by carrying out this process (e.g. if the parents did not agree with counselling, or if the presenting issue was family-related). Ultimately, asking for parental/caregiver consent in this research jeopardised the confidentiality of the student, in so far as identifying to their parents/caregivers that they were interested in attending counselling and taking part in research. Students who did not want to gain consent from their parents were

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excluded from the research. Alternative options for these students to engage in counselling in a non-research capacity were discussed (a requirement of the HEC and of working within the New Zealand public education system).

Participants were also assured in their initial consultation that their participation in the research would not inhibit their access to the school guidance counsellors during the course of the research, or in the future. Participants were also assured that they could withdraw from the research at any time, and were given the process whereby they could do this.

A final consideration for the safety of the participants relates to safe practice on the part of the counsellor.

*“Counsellors shall arrange for regular and ongoing supervision with competent supervisors, who should be either NZAC members, or members of another professional body with a Code of Ethics acceptable to the NZAC National Executive” (New Zealand Association of Counsellors, 2016, p. 11)*

This was addressed by external supervision by a NZAC-approved supervisor who provided supervision every three weeks. Weekly internal supervision was also provided by the school’s guidance department.

## 5 Results

This results section is divided into two parts. The first part presents the text messages that were sent to the participants, and shows how these messages fit with the key SFBT tools of co-construction; use participant language; are strengths-based; and promote participant agency. The second section presents the themes that I identified in the participants' feedback on the co-construction of text messages, and how the text messages were received.

### 5.1 The text messages, and how they utilised SFBT tools

Tables 1, 2, and 3 present the text messages that were sent to participants between each of the sessions. The following section explores the development of the text messages, and highlights how they embedded key SFBT tools throughout. Such principles include co-construction; the use of participant language; strengths-based practice; and promoting participant agency. As will be exemplified, there were some key overarching ways that the text messages differed between sessions for all participants.

Universal to all text messages was the rapport-building approach used with the aim of increasing the messages' relevance to participants, and to hopefully have them pay more attention to the text messages they received. This rapport-building included using topical observations (e.g. the weather, time of year, or participants' upcoming mock exams); using emojis (a small icon used to express idea or emotion in text message communication). To help convey positive emotions in text; and using a friendly, conversational tone (e.g. 'hey', 'hi' or 'We can have a chat about this next session').

Most text messages use language and content that came from each participant's conversation. In accordance with SFBT practice, I note my use of phrases such as 'we talked about' and 'you mentioned', which were used to encourage participant agency. The text messages were individualised and included terminology that the participant used. As will be further discussed in the subsequent results sections, some 'slang' or 'text' abbreviations were also used where appropriate to mimic language used by the participant across all of the sessions. This was because the intention was for the participant to read and pay attention to what the text message said, and for it not be seen as an automated system.

One challenge that was presented at the end of the research was that participants went on study leave in the lead up to their practice exams. With participants being offsite and the usual appointment reminder system (i.e. a message slip delivered to their classroom) no longer able to be utilised, text messages towards the end of the research also included reminders of the appointments that they had arranged at their previous session.

Overall the process demonstrated that using text messages enabled the use of SFBT tools in both the co-construction of the text messages with the participants, and the text messages themselves. These SFBT tools will now be explored in relation to each stage of the research;

#### 5.1.1 Embedding SFBT tools between Sessions One and Two

##### *5.1.1.1 Process of co-constructing during session one*

As mentioned in the procedure section, for the final ten minutes of each session, the participant and I would talk about what might be useful to focus on between the current session and the next. In this way, we were able to co-construct a Between Session Task that aligned with the participant's own goals, and the participant's understanding of what would help them

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move towards those goals. Once we had established this, we then discussed what kind of text message the participant would like to receive in order to continue to feel motivated to carry out their selected Between Session Task. We also discussed how many text messages the participant would like to receive and when.

In the co-construction of the text message during the first session, participants were unfamiliar with the idea of setting between session text messages. This is likely due to the nature of this being the unfamiliar research element. The excerpt below demonstrates how the idea of sending between session text messages was introduced, and how the context of the between session text messages was co-constructed:

**Transcript (Session 1, Participant 1):**

[Counsellor]: So what would be some good things that you could work on between now and the next session?

[Participant]: I think I need to go to the website to-do some aural practice and really need to talk to my teacher about it, which is more of the scary element of it.

[Counsellor]: Ok talk to teacher... How can I help you with text reminders, is there any particular language that would make you do it or make you feel better about doing it?

[Participant]: Yeah positive stuff

[Counsellor]: Any particular phrases or sayings that you like?

[Participant]: As long as you don't use text language...that would be helpful

[Counsellor]: If we were to dedicate a couple of text messages to each one. Two about going to this website. Well how many text messages would you want to receive a week, between 2-5, won't happen in the weekends, just because I don't want to have that work and you don't want that either. How many do you think it would be good to have?

[Participant]: I think that two around going to the aural website, would be helpful.

[Counsellor]: Yeah

[Participant]: and then one or two about talking to the teacher

[Counsellor]: And what time of day would be good for you

[Participant]: Preferably not in the evening

[Counsellor]: So we talking 3-4pm

[Participant]: Yeah 4pm

[Counsellor]: What this will be, is around shifting along the scale, because I think this plays a lot into this. Is it specifically a music teacher?

[Participant]: Yeah a music teacher

Shown here is a focus on a participant driven process of co-construction that is strengths-based and keeps the participant in control of all elements of the process. This includes asking what time of day the participant preferred to receive text messages and how many messages the participant would like to receive between sessions.

Some participants were more reluctant or hesitant when co-constructing the text messages, due to this process being unfamiliar. This was particularly evident for Participant 4 who was the only participant in the research who had not attended counselling previously and thus was both unfamiliar with both the counselling environment and with being part of research.

In contrast with Participant 1, Participant 4 had some reluctance around the co-construction or uncertainty of the text message process, with the response by the participant as 'not really'. However, the co-construction process became easier after some guiding questions around what would be helpful for the participant to receive. Although in the example it is evident that the counsellor is having to work harder, key SFBT principles of promoting agency and strengths-based conversations are still present.

**Transcript (Session 1, Participant 4):**

**[Counsellor]:** Solution Focused has a belief that you are always shifting towards a preferred future. Something that you want more of. So a way to make that a quicker process is what is called a Between Session Task to work on a particular aspect of the session through the week. So out of all the things you have mentioned today on how you would like to move from a 6 to a 10 on your scale....for example...there is talk to people, proper night's rest, not making a deal out of things. Which one of those would be best for you to focus on?

**[Participant]:** Urm...*[pause for thinking]* I think talking ..maybe to people..

**[Counsellor]:** Okay talking to people... And... what would be useful to talk about in relation to this.. and this might go into the next session...would you like for the next session the whole talking to people stuff?

\*bell goes\*

**[Participant]:** Yeah

**[Counsellor]:** in-terms of through the week and these text reminders, I am keen for me not to tell you what to do. Is there any particular language that really resonates for you...does that make any sense at all?

**[Participant]:** *[confused tone]* not really

**[Counsellor]:** So if I am sending you a text message are there any words that you enjoy receiving? Does that make more sense?...

**[Participant]:** *[confused tone]* not really

**[Counsellor]:** And would you like messages around talking to people or anything else?

**[Participant]:** No just about that

**[Counsellor]:** And how many would you like to receive?

**[Participant]:** I guess it depends when my next session is?

\*Discussion about when is best for next appointment around exams\*

**[Counsellor]:** I understand that we are a little time pressured and you need to get to class...specifically with this talking to people, would there be anything that would be helpful around that...like any messages that would help

**[Participant]:** I don't know... I don't do a lot

**[Counsellor]:** So encouraging you to talk to people... or

**[Participant]:** probably encouraging

**[Counsellor]:** Ok encouraging you to talk to people and also maybe acknowledging of what you have successfully done before as well?

**[Participant]:** *[upbeat]* urmm

**[Counsellor]:** *[integrating session content]* for example this Friday with meeting this unfamiliar person, you can do this, you planned around it. Would that help too, encouragement that you have done this before....?

**[Participant]:** Yes *[affirming]*! Like a reminder that it has happened, I can do it and it went well.

As demonstrated in the first paragraph of the transcript above, during the first co-construction some explanation was given around the process. For this participant extra time was spent to explain the process due to their unfamiliarity with counselling. This did seem to help as the participant started to provide more concrete answers. This example is more guided than the other participants' conversations, however, the participant was still included in key decisions around what would be helpful to receive in the form of a between session text message, thus promoting participant choice and agency. To increase the relevance of the text messages the counsellor included some reflection on topics covered by the participant during the session and asked the participant whether this would also be helpful to receive.

Due to the unfamiliar nature for the counsellor of adding the co-construction of the text messages to face-to-face practice, it was not known how much time would need to be allocated during the session for this addition to face-to-face practice. Thus, the co-construction during the first session often went over time, evident in the transcript above with the note: \*bell goes\*, indicating that the that school bell has rung and indicating that 45 minutes has gone by and



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students are moving to their next class. This summons the end of all counselling sessions and attempts need to be made to conclude counselling as soon as possible (so that it does not incur more time out of class and a participant having to return to class partway through a lesson). Further, explanation of the process took longer in Session 1 for all participants because of the counsellor and the participants' unfamiliarity with the process. In some examples it is evident that the process is a little rushed and sometimes dismissive of participants' suggestions.

#### *5.1.1.2 Use of participants' language*

As presented at the beginning of this results section, the text messages used participants' language. For example, the below text message that was sent to a participant may seem blunt, however, this was using the directive language that the participant wanted to be sent to them in a between session text message to motivate them. Also of note is the informal greeting of 'hey'. This was how the participant greeted me each session, seeming quite informal with their language in this regard. Therefore, this seemed to be the best way to open the between session text message.

#### **Example text message (Text message 3, Participant 1):**

"Hey, a bit of practice on the music website might make you feel better about talking to ur music teacher".

In the second example, the participant wanted the term 'stay positive' sent to them. In contrast to Participant 1 in the previous example, I have used 'Hi' followed by the participant's name. This was because he was more formal on how they greeted me on the first session by referring to me as Mr Gribbin and, on occasion, George. Therefore, 'Hi' followed by the

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participant's name seemed most appropriate way to use the participant's language to open the between session text message to Participant 2.

**Example text message (Text message 1, Participant 2):**

“Hi [name], George here your counsellor. Good session today, stay positive and notice the good things that you are doing. Let me know in the next session how that goes for you”.

*5.1.1.3 Use of strengths-based content*

Text messages used strengths-based content throughout the research, however given that this was the first group of text messages to be sent, additional affirmations were included to support engagement with the participants. For example, in the below text message the participant had, through the process of co-construction, expressed that they'd like affirmation that they were 'doing ok'. This was because they felt they were not noticing the strengths that they had.

**Example text message (Text message 1, Participant 1):**

“What are you noticing about yourself when you are performing? Sometimes it can be easy to knock ourselves down at times and not notice all the awesome stuff that you are doing. Let me know in the next session”

*5.1.1.4 Promoting participant agency*

To promote participant agency, initial text messages used 'noticing' prompts and included validations and encouragement from the counsellor. In keeping with solution focused

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principles, initial text message suggestions were tentative and used noticing terminology to support the participant to succeed with the task. For example;

**Example text message (Text message 2, Participant 4):**

“What do you notice about times when you are not stressed, how are you feeling and what are you doing? Let me know how that went for you next session”

Overall the text messages between sessions one and two were more counsellor driven and may not have provided as much agency to the participant as they did in subsequent sessions. The text messages were also quite wordy. The above descriptions, however, highlight that by introducing text messages to co-construct between-session text messages, the intentions of SFBT to increase rapport, client autonomy and empowerment were all well achieved. As the next sections demonstrate the participants also experienced increasing agency.

**Table 1.**

*Table showing the between session text messages that were sent to participants between Sessions One and Two.*

Participant 1 (Female, Year 12)	Participant 2 (Male, Year 12)	Participant 3 (Female, Year 11)	Participant 4 (Female, Year 12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are you noticing about yourself when you are performing? Sometimes it can be easy to knock ourselves down at times and not notice all the awesome stuff that you are doing. Let me know in the next session.</li> <li>• You mentioned in the session that you wanted to talk to your music teacher about how you are feeling at the moment. I am wondering how you are feeling about talking to your teacher? Let me know where you are at with this in the next session.</li> <li>• Hey, a bit of practice on the music website might make you feel better about talking to ur music teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hi...George here your counsellor. Good session today, stay positive and notice the good things that you are doing. Let me know in the next session how that goes for you.</li> <li>• Hi... you talked about some great mates that you have, it's great to have those people in your life. Think about one of those mates, what are you thankful for about him/her? Let me know how that went next session</li> <li>• Hi...Stay positive over the weekend and hope that you can take some time for yourself in between study. You will get another text on Monday and have booked you in for a session on Tuesday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George here your counsellor, good session today. What are you noticing about times when you are getting on with your mother? There will be an opportunity to talk about this in the next session, feel free to bring it up then.</li> <li>• Same question different family member! What are you noticing about times when you are getting on with your Father? There will be an opportunity to talk about this in the next session, feel free to bring it up then.</li> <li>• You mentioned that you do not want any drama around the house and would like a more relaxed family environment, has there been a time in the last couple of days where there has been a little</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hi, George you counsellor here. Great session today. Awesome that the other day that you met another person. Acknowledge a job well done, I am interested in what you have learnt about yourself. There will be an opportunity to talk about this next session :D</li> <li>• What do you notice about times when you are not stressed, how are you feeling and what are you doing? Let me know how that went for you next session</li> <li>• You talked about wanting to be more talkative and comfortable meeting new people. You gave me a recent example of meeting a new person. I am wondering how you are feeling about being</li> </ul>

Participant 1 (Female, Year 12)	Participant 2 (Male, Year 12)	Participant 3 (Female, Year 11)	Participant 4 (Female, Year 12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hey, hope you have a good weekend, you won't get any texts, but have a think what ones are useful and what ones are not. Have booked u in for 2<sup>nd</sup> period Monday for an appointment, let me know if that works for you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sorry about this text is a bit later, what are you noticing about time when you are having a good day, maybe playing a computer game, hanging out with mates...? What is great about that day? There will be an opportunity to talk about this in tomorrow's session. You are booked in for period 3<sup>rd</sup> period. See you then :)</li> </ul>	<p>bit of this? It would be awesome if you could let me know an example in the next session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about those good conversations you had this week.</li> <li>Hi, hope you have a good weekend. Have a think over the weekend about the texts and what were useful/what were not. There will be a chance to talk about it next session. Booked you in for Monday 10.50.*</li> </ul> <p>*The participant responded on the Monday, the session started later and therefore was shorter: "Hey I know I'm not suppose to reply to these but I don't have any internet and I needed to tell you that I'm going to be late. Idk why, but my bus is about 20 minutes late"</p>	<p>introduces to somebody new with a friend near-by? If this is something that you would like more of, we can talk about it in the next session :D enjoy the sunshine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you enjoy talking about? Let me know next session</li> <li>Hi, hope you have a good weekend. Have a think over the weekend about the texts and what were useful/what were not. There will be a chance to talk about it next session.</li> <li>Hi, see you tomorrow 4<sup>th</sup> period, about 12.45**</li> </ul> <p>**Participant responded to this text message and an alternative time was arranged: "Hey George, my apologies but something has come up and I am unable to attend the session today, sorry for any inconveniences caused, are we able to reschedule for Friday?"</p>

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### 5.1.2 Embedding SFBT tools between Sessions Two and Three.

#### 5.1.2.1 *Process of co-constructing during Session Two*

In the co-construction of the text messages during the second session, participants were increasing their familiarity with the process. This is demonstrated with both the ease of the process of co-construction and the text messages themselves. For example, Participant 4 who was hesitant about the co-construction in the first session participated in the process with more confidence.

#### **Transcript (Session 2, Participant 4):**

**[Counsellor]:** In terms of this week, what would be useful to send you in a text message?

**[Participant]:** Urm... *[participant in thought]* The thought provoking questions were quite good, I liked those ones.

**[Counsellor]:** Are there any phrases that you use or hit a chord with you?

**[Participant]:** Not Really *[confused tone]*

**[Counsellor]:** So...thought provoking questions...thought provoking questions about what, would there be anything particular?

**[Participant]:** Urm... *[participant in thought]* Around coping, what I do to cope and stuff....

**[Counsellor]:** To try to identify that more for you, would that be right?

**[Participant]:** Yeah

**[Counsellor]:** So that you can process that and figure out for yourself how to manage your situation right?

**[Participant]:** Yeah, that would be helpful

**[Counsellor]:** What around things around noticing...some more mindfulness stuff around noticing. You have mentioned today that you find New Zealand peaceful, relaxing etc. Would it be helpful for me to send you out some messages about what you notice when you are out on a walk?

**[Participant]:** Yeah, that sounds good.

[Counsellor]: How many would you want?

[Participant]: Let's do four.

In contrast to Session One, during the co-construction process, all participants provided some thought as to what would be useful to be sent to them throughout the week in the way of a between session text message. This is evident in the excerpt on the previous page, with the participant pausing for thought. In listening to the transcript, it is evident that this participant is working hard to figure out exactly what they want to work on for themselves between sessions. This appears to demonstrate the SFBT assumption that co-construction of Between Session Tasks provides the opportunity for the client to take control of their own actions to move towards their own preferred future.

Overall the text messages were briefer because both the participants and the counsellor were getting used to the between session text messages, their purpose, and, for the counsellor, a familiarity with the participants' language.

#### 5.1.2.2 *Use of participants' language*

In contrast to Session One, more of the text messages included words or phrases that the participants used to motivate themselves and were less counsellor-driven. Such phrases included, "*Options*" (Text Message 2, Participant 1) and "*Remember, I got this, this is OK!*" (Text Message 3, Participant 1). For Participant 1, these two text messages were enough to remind them of the Between Session Task, despite appearing as seemingly 'meaningless' phrases to another reader.

One participant struggled with the terminology of counselling and engaging with the mental health profession, but identified that more informal language was easier for them to hear. Text messages such as, "*We can have a chat about this next session :D*" (Text Message

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2, Participant 3) were co-constructed for this participant to engage with more easily, than if the text message had referred to the “...next *counselling* session”.

#### 5.1.2.3 *Use of strengths-based content*

The strengths-based content of text messages continued between Sessions Two and Three, and aligned to the best hopes that participants had set during Session Two. One example is a participant who had some anxiety around exams and they had spent some time in the session talking about this. While the main purpose of a particular week of text messages for them was a focus on “*Options*” (Text Message 2, Participant 1), the below text message also reminded them that it was the last day of practice exams, which related to their other best hope for the week of getting through the stressful week of exams.

#### **Example text message (Text message 3, Participant 1):**

“Last day of mock exams tomorrow! Remember your roots and that you always have options”

Another example of focusing on best hopes was a participant who perceived some challenges getting outside to socialise. One of their best hopes was to work on the new relationship they were in, especially the factors that made for a healthy relationship. The below example focused on this best hope, however, it also challenged them to ‘enjoy the sunshine’.

#### **Example text message (Text message 2, Participant 2):**

“What is good about being in a close relationship with someone? You will have a chance to talk about next session, enjoy the sunshine”



#### 5.1.2.4 *Promoting participant agency*

Text messages between Sessions Two and Three were generally shorter. In part, this was influenced by the pressure on my time to text each participant three or four times during the week. The shorter text messages were also in response to the participants who had mentioned that shorter and more specific text messages would be helpful.

##### **Transcript (Session 2, Participant 1):**

[Counsellor]: So with that, I was wondering what it was like at the beginning of the week and what it was like at the end of the week? Were there better ones, worse ones?

[Participant]: Yeah, towards the end of the week they were probably better. But I think that it was the whole variety thing. Not being carbon copies. They were quite nice to get and be positively reminded about the stuff going on, it was good.

[Counsellor]: So you said it was good that the text messages were quite specific around things that you wanted to focus on, some were around looking online to find options. You liked that part, the more specific ones?

[Participant]: Yeah, it was good.

As participants became more familiar with the previously unfamiliar co-construction process, fewer words were needed to ensure the text messages were helpful to the participant. Many of the text messages between Sessions Two and Three were also more action-based. For example, many of the text messages had references to doing, driving, and having conversations. This is consistent with the Solution Focused principle that inviting participants to act (rather than just notice) demonstrates the counsellor's belief that the participant will succeed in doing something.

##### **Example text message (Text message 2, Participant 3):**

“What was good about your mum letting you drive? We can have a chat about this next session :D”

**Table 2.**

*Table showing the between session text messages that were sent to participants between sessions two and three.*

Participant 1 (Female, Year 12)	Participant 2 (Male, Year 12)	Participant 3 (Female, Year 11)	Participant 4 (Female, Year 12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options</li> <li>Remember, I got this, this is OK!</li> <li>Last day of mock exams tomorrow! Remember your roots and that you always have options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You mentioned that thing have been bumpy with your girlfriend recently. However, you mentioned that last night was better. What are you noticing about the moments, even if it is just a little bit when you are getting on with your girlfriend. You will have a chance to talk about this next session, feel free to talk about it then.</li> <li>What is good about being in a close relationship with someone? You will have a chance to talk about next session, enjoy the sunshine .</li> <li>Hi , hope your study is going OK? Stay positive! Let me know how it is going next session.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hey, awesome your mum let you drive!</li> <li>What was good about your mum letting you drive? We can have a chat about this next session :D</li> <li>Today has been a sunny day, what has been good about your day? Let me know next session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was good about hanging out with you ur mum in between studying for mock exams? Let me know next session</li> <li>Think about those good conversations that you have had over the last couple of days and what is good about them?</li> <li>How do you feel after a good conversation?</li> </ul>

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Participant 1 (Female, Year 12)	Participant 2 (Male, Year 12)	Participant 3 (Female, Year 11)	Participant 4 (Female, Year 12)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay positive over the weekend. Next week we will talk about the texts, have a think what ones are good and which ones are bad over the weekend.</li> <li>• Hey, stay positive! Have booked you in for an appointment 2nd period tomorrow.***</li> </ul> <p>***Note: the participant responded to this text message with and an alternate time was arranged: "I am so sorry Mr Gribbin, but something has come up and I can't make the appointment today. I was hoping that we can reschedule. Thanks a lot"</p>		

### 5.1.3 Embedding SFBT tools between Sessions Three and Four

#### 5.1.3.1 *Process of co-constructing during Session Three*

Some participants still needed more guidance than others in the co-construction process to decide what would be best to send in the between session text message. However, in listening to the recording, Participant 3 appears to have less hesitance about the co-construction process and more understanding of the importance of finding the most appropriate terminology to be used in the between session text messages. This is evident in the below example where the participant pauses less than during previous co-construction examples and demonstrates a depth of engagement in the process.

#### **Transcript (Session 3, Participant 4):**

[Counsellor]: I wonder what would be useful to work on throughout this week, bearing in mind the conversation that we had today [pause]...

[Participant]: Kinda [*sic*]... keeping in mind that it is not all bad...

[Counsellor]: ok, would you call that staying positive?

[Participant]: Yeah, I guess?

[Counsellor]: would that be your terminology?

[Participant]: More, optimism.

[Counsellor]: and to tease that out about, what do you mean by optimism, that is quite a broad word.

[Participant]: Well when you are having a bad social week or whatever, you can spiral. So I guess just keeping in mind that it has worked previously and not all the time it has failed.

[Counsellor]: So reminding you of your successes that you have had as-well.

[Counsellor]: So how many text messages would you like be useful receive?

**[Participant]:** I quite like the four

**[Counsellor]:** And I am going to be quite specific on what these text messages would be

**[Participant]:** [pause] yurrm

**[Counsellor]:** Some text messages could be around, being in the present moment, some could be around mindfulness and some could be around relationships, some has been around optimism. If we were to take the optimism that you mentioned, would it be good to send you some examples of when that has worked in the past for you?

**[Participant]:** Yeah I guess so

**[Counsellor]:** So if we did one that was ‘remember the great time you had at the movies in the holidays?’

**[Participant]:** Yeah

**[Counsellor]:** Anything else?.... We have also talked about good conversations today...

**[Participant]:** Yeah and how you feel after them.

**[Counsellor]:** So maybe one could be talking about the time you went to the movies and how you felt good after it? Would that be helpful as well?

**[Counsellor]:** Yeah...

**[Participant]:** Anything else?

**[Counsellor]:** What about, techniques that work for you, exploring some more around these exercises.

**[Participant]:** I guess trying to figure out a time when it is most useful?

**[Counsellor]:** And when we are talking about time, do you mean a specific time of day or after a specific event?

**[Participant]:** I don’t mean what time of day, just when to practiced when best to practice. For example: when I am feeling stressed, anxious, calm, relaxed..

The example above also shows that the participant was honest within the co-construction, and thoughtful about what would be useful to be sent to them throughout the week. This was consistent across all participants. The example also demonstrates that I was inclined to

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encourage specific aspects that the participant would find helpful. In SFBT, specificity is intended to help the client focus on small steps towards a preferred future.

Overall in Session Three it was also evident that participants were fatigued and were looking forward to their school holidays, presenting a challenge to keeping them engaged. However, the majority of participants engaged with the co-construction with intent.

#### *5.1.3.2 Use of participants' language*

The example below demonstrates particular emphasis on the specific phrasing and use of the participant's language, which was consistent for all participants' text messages between Sessions Three and Four. In this example, the participant wanted to be reminded to be optimistic and also to reminisce about their previous successes. Thus, the between session text message content was split over two text messages on consecutive days.

#### **Example text messages (Text messages 2 and 3, participant 4):**

“It's important to remember the success that you had with those conversations you had at the movies, you can do it”

Preceded by,

“It is great to remain optimistic, have a good weekend”

#### *5.1.3.3 Use of strengths-based content*

The strengths-based content of the text messages was an integral part of keeping participants engaged throughout the research. Noticeably, as rapport was increasingly built

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with the participants, alongside their increased trust in the process, many of the text messages were simply positively-framed statements. For example:

**Example text message (Text message 1, Participant 2):**

“It’s important to remember those important relationships that you have”

*5.1.3.4 Promoting participant agency*

The text messages between Sessions Three and Four are noticeably different, in that they focus on the confidence that the participant has agency. Many text messages used the word ‘remember’ to help participants direct their own actions. For example;

**Example text message (Text message 2, Participant 4):**

“It’s important to remember the success that you had with those conversations you had at the movies, you can do it”.

Again, the text messages continued to make the participant accountable for their own Between Session Tasks and reflections. For example, the below text messages asked the participant to reflect, however it was not phrased in a way that was ‘homework’ or as a request for the task to be completed. Text messages were phrased as more of a suggestion, with the onus on the participant to action their Between Session Task if they wished:

**Example text message (Text message 2, Participant 1):**

“What will close people notice about you when you are involved in the theatre?”

Throughout the research, the text messages also kept the participants in the loop of what was happening and provided them with an option to give feedback. However, the text messages

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between Session Three and Four included a reminder that the fourth (and final) session would include some time for the participant to provide feedback as to how they found the research as a whole. Such text messages served as an affirmation that the participants' feedback would be acknowledged, and time would be allocated to listen to it. Notably, requests for participants to provide feedback were phrased as more of a way of providing an 'update' than it was a direction to provide feedback. In this way, it used language that was consistent with the participants', and further promoted choice and agency. For example;

**Example text message (Text message 3, Participant 2):**

“Hi, I have booked you in for an appointment third period Friday. The session will be mainly around how you found the text's *[sic]* and anything else you want to talk about. You can get your movie vouchers!”



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**Table 3.**

*Table showing the between session text messages that were sent to participants between sessions three and four.*

Participant 1 (Female, Year 12)	Participant 2 (Male, Year 12)	Participant 3 (Female, Year 11)	Participant 4 (Female, Year 12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's important to remind ourselves of our passions, like the theatre!</li> <li>• What will close people notice about you when you are involved in the theatre?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's important to remember those important relationships that you have.</li> <li>• What is good about being included in a number of different relationships?</li> <li>• Hi.... Have booked you in for and appointment 2<sup>nd</sup> period Friday. The session will be mainly around how you found the texts and anything else you want to talk about. You can get your movie vouchers then! See you then.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to notice the great thing that [REDACTED] gives you</li> <li>• Hi, I have booked you in for and appointment 3<sup>rd</sup> period Friday. The session will be mainly around how you found the text's and anything else you want to talk about. You can get your movie vouchers!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was great about the times at the movies in the holidays? Let me know next session :D</li> <li>• It's important to remember the success that you had with those conversations you had at the movies, you can do it</li> <li>• It is great to remain optimistic, have a good weekend</li> <li>• When is it a good time to practice mindfulness tension exercises? There will be an opportunity to talk about this tomorrow, feel free to bring it up then.</li> </ul>

The previous sections have focused on the process of co-constructing and on the content of the text messages. For the second part of the analysis I have focused on the feedback given by participants about the use of between session text messages. I have used Thematic Analysis, to code and describe the main themes that emerged in participants' feedback.

## **5.2 Themes identified through the participants' feedback**

Participants provided some feedback about the between session text messages and the research process in its entirety. The themes presented in the participant feedback were: promoting participant agency; use of participant language; between session positivity; and normalising counselling conversations. These themes are explored in the following sections:

### **5.2.1 Promoting participant agency**

Feedback from a participant demonstrated agency when they reflected on the potential to use these text messages to increase resilience and coping mechanisms, and have less reliance on services when they moved on from secondary school (e.g. to further education or to work). One participant felt that the text messages could act as an effective way to start practicing good positive self-talk for when clients do not necessarily have access to a counsellor with such ease (e.g. in the school holidays or after they have finished high school).

**[Participant]:** I think having the text messages is good. You hear it in your own head, you hear it in your own words. I think the text messages encourage that positive self talk ...*[pause]*...because the reality is that a lot of kids are going to go on after high school to see a counsellor, and there not going to know how to talk to one and know to ask what they need. So I think the text helped hear it in your own voices and that positive self-talk, that you can then use as a coping mechanism for when you not have left high school and do not have access to a free counsellor or over the school holidays when you cannot see them.

Text messages also affirmed to the participants that ‘it is ok’ to take some time for yourself and focus on their Between Session Task. The text messages acting as a stimulus to participants to take a moment to reflect and work on their Between Session Task. During a time of elevated stress, with mock exams and students not taking time to look after themselves, a break to focus on their between session task was appreciated by all participants.

**[Participant]:** The text messages were helpful to remind myself to-do those things when I was frazzled and stressed with studying for exams.

Inclusion of the client throughout the co-construction process and including session-relevant content made use of between session time by refreshing session content, therefore promoting independent reflection for participants in between sessions. One participant suggested that it was almost like getting two counselling sessions per week (see below excerpt).

**[Participant]:** I think it was good having the text messages, it was almost like refreshing the session in your head...so it was good.

**[Participant]:** Yeah I did..., I know some people who go to counselling twice a week, so this is an easier way of going once a week, so going less often... but thinking about it more often. Like the text messages remind you of the session, so it’s almost like having more sessions in the week but you are not.

The text messages appeared to help promote participant agency by keeping participants in control and preparing for future sessions. Feedback from the participants suggested that they felt like they should ‘prepare for counselling’. With some text messages sent between sessions setting the precedent (e.g. “*we can have a chat about it next session*”) it provided the participant with an insight into what to prepare for, which in turn made participants feel in control. For one participant they got out their phone during the session and went through their text messages to re-cap their week and reflect on what was better, with the text messages acting as stimuli for their memories about what was happening when they got the text messages and notable events that they wanted to raise that happened between sessions. For another

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participant, they had felt with a previous counsellor that they had to bring something new to each session. It was a comfort to them knowing that there were the text messages to fall back on if needed.

**[Participant]:** One thing about the text that is really good is that you always know before each session that you do have something to talk about... particularly with a outside school counsellor I had. I would go to the session and would have to try and like try and think up something. Try and think really hard... *[elevated voice]*...WHAT'S BOTHERING ME...WHAT DO I NEED TO TALK ABOUT! That is why having those texts were great as immediately they would spark a thought. So, if you remember the text, you can look at the text and then walk into the session and be like...I have this to fall back on if needed.

### 5.2.2 Use of participants' language

As noted in the section on text messages, I was pleased to note that I demonstrated the solution focused principle of using the participants' language by spending time with the participants and determining the language and terminology that would most accurately address their needs.

When providing feedback on the nature of the messages, participants also referred to their preference for their own language; focused messages; and including content-relevant session content.

**[Participant]:** I liked the fact that it was focused, and pin pointed and things from the actual session that you had. And in that way reminded you of the session and what you talked about.

Participants also enjoyed the text messages being short and specific, as opposed to wordy text messages

**[Participant]:** It was good being short and stuff like that

One surprise, with reference to the use of a client's own language, was that in contrast to the assumption that many young people like text language, it was unanimous amongst all participants that they preferred full sentences. In accordance with SFBT principles, the research therefore avoided making assumptions, and ensured the appropriate use of language to fit client preference.

**[Participant]:** ...as long as you don't use text language... that would be helpful

Participants also liked that the text messages were individualised and not scripted.

**[Participant]:** Nice that they were all different, not carbon copies

In SFBT counselling, one intention is for the counsellor to help a participant understand and recognise what they would be doing when they achieved their stated goals. Feedback provided by the participants demonstrates that when they co-constructed text messages, and received them, they came to recognise a shift towards achievement of their goals relating to their preferred future. During the research, one participant was so stressed out with exams, they could not see that the moment was temporary and would pass. In times like these SFBT counsellors sometime utilise a third person exception question, which can be easier for a client to reflect when personal reflection can be challenging. For example, a text message that was sent to this participant between sessions was, "*What will close people notice about you when you are involved in the theatre?*". During the feedback process, the participant expressed that this text message started a meaningful conversation with her mum, allowing the participant to reflect on their overall goal of becoming an actor, and to realise that their exam stress was temporary.

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**[Participant]:** It made me think about when I got that text message, how do I change and...I actually said to my mum...How do I change?...do you notice a change. So it was interesting to talk about that.

### 5.2.3 Between session positivity

Participants expressed that they found the process of constructing text messages positive and helpful, for a number of reasons. First, a number of participants reported that the between session text messages gave them a boost and encouraged them to reflect on good things:

**[Participant]:** They were quite nice to get and be positively reminded about the stuff going on, it was good

And another participant:

**[Participant]:** They were really helpful, nice to receive pick me ups

Secondly, it allowed further reflection on the strengths-based work completed within counselling sessions. For one participant, the text messages were helpful for her in looking at the positive side of a situation;

**[Participant]:** Yeah it got me to think, it got me to think about the conversations that went well and what you feel like, but also the ones that went badly, what does that entail afterwards. It was good

For another participant they liked text messages that posed reflective questions;

**[Participant]:** The question ones were helpful...like the ones that got you to think, I liked those ones.

For another participant, receiving text messages encouraged her to use positive self-talk (something that she had already determined was helpful). They said:

**[Participant]:** It was helpful, it was nice, yeah, always good to remind myself of that sort of thing...yeah I was pretty good last week with the positive self-talk.

#### 5.2.4 Normalised counselling conversations

For a number of participants, the text messages ‘broke the ice’ about accessing support in New Zealand. The text messages allowed them to share the progress they were making through attending counselling with others.

For one participant, it made it easier for her talk to friends about having a counsellor:

**[Counsellor]:** So it made conversations around counselling easier?

**[Participant]:** I sometimes was hanging with friends when I got a text... they would ask, you alright and I could say... Ah, I got this cool text from my counsellor and it is what we are trialling, then I could talk about it to them about it. It was good because it acted as a prompt...It kind of makes it easier to talk about, those types of things to people. Because I don't think that counselling or mental health conversations should be taboo.

For another participant, the texting helped open up some conversations with her parents:

**[Participant]:** Sometimes, it brought up really interesting conversations with my parents...I think that the kids that are engaged with their parents, I feel that it would be good to have those texts as conversation starters.

One participant felt that she was more prepared for counselling than she had been previously. Not having to bring something ‘new’ each time, the participant explained that with the text message, she always had something to talk about. The text messages acted as a stimulus to bring something to counselling that she wanted to discuss. If she had forgotten what she wanted to talk about she could go back through her message history before the session to remind herself of what she wanted to bring up in a session.

In this chapter I have described the process that took place for co-constructing between session messages and the key tools of SFBT that were utilised (participant language; promotion of agency and a strengths-focused approach). These were described with text message

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examples and excerpts of transcripts. Key differences in the way that messages were co-constructed between sessions were also noted. The second part of the results presents a Thematic Analysis on feedback from participants and supports the finding that co-constructing text messages enhances the key SFBT principles of encouraging client agency by using their language and focusing on strengths. In the next chapter I will consider these findings alongside the relevant literature, in addition to their implications for counsellors.



## 6 Discussion

As this thesis has discussed, the mental health of young people in Aotearoa is alarmingly poor (Clark et al., 2013; Crengle et al., 2012; OECD, 2018), and there is increasing recognition of the many interventions that are needed to support young people. The Government and schools have focused on improving the health and wellbeing of all young people, and a number of key initiatives such as Health Promoting Schools (based on the World Health Organisation's Ottawa Charter) and the Youth Mental Health project have been set up (King, 2000; Minister of Health, 2016; World Health Organisation, 2018). Since the inclusion of high school guidance counselling services in the 1970's, school counsellors have also worked to address the mental health needs of young people. My research sits within this context of addressing the mental health needs of young people.

SFBT is a counselling approach that is regarded as appropriate for school counsellors for a number of reasons. First, the approach is sufficiently flexible to address the rapidly changing needs of young people. Further, SFBT encourages a sense of autonomy and control for young people when they and the therapist collaborate through co-construction, and when the client is the centre of the process (Kim, 2008; Kim & Franklin, 2009). At a systems level, SFBT is also considered to be a cost-effective approach, especially for its ability to make a positive difference in a short timeframe. Such benefits are appealing for funders such as the Ministry of Education, especially as such an approach is likely to minimise the time that students are out of class, and can maximise the number of students that can be seen by counselling services (Kelly et al., 2008).

Despite such benefits, face-to-face therapies like SFBT do not address the reluctance that many young people have to seek help for counselling support. Literature on E-therapies however suggests that they appeal to young people because the technology-based approach allows them a sense of anonymity, agency, confidentiality and access to counselling through a

platform that is more familiar than traditional face-to-face conversations (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014; Glasheen et al., 2015; Khadjesari et al., 2011). For males, who are less likely than females to seek help, studies have indicated that offering online counselling may break the ice and open the door to people who would not usually access services (Ciarrochi et al., 2002; Manthei, 2012). Whilst there are many benefits of using E-therapies, some concerns have been raised surrounding breaches of confidentiality, assessment of risk and client safety.

In this research, I wanted to explore what it was like to introduce a technological element into a particular aspect of traditional face-to-face SFBT counselling. I hoped that this would combine the strengths of E-therapy (accessibility, and familiarity of platform) with the strengths of SFBT (client-driven, future-focused, goal-oriented and positive) in addition to the strengths of face-to-face counselling (confidentiality, relationship- building and assessment of client safety) (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014; Glasheen et al., 2015; Hanley & Reynolds, 2009; Netsafe.org.nz, 2018; Khadjesari et al., 2011).

The basis of this research was an extension of my normal SFBT counselling practice. In particular, I wanted to explore whether some adaptation of providing a client with homework at the end of a session would be useful for my practice, and for my clients. As noted in the literature, homework tasks in counselling are regarded as helpful for clients. The SFBT literature regards the co-construction of homework tasks as most beneficial for clients as it enables them to access their own successful strategies for moving towards their preferred future (De Jong & Berg, 2012; Tanner, 2009; Hanton, 2011). For this research I adapted the co-construction of a homework task, with the inclusion of a co-constructed a text message that I would send them between counselling sessions, with the aim of supporting them with their Between Session Task.

At the outset of the research, I set myself two guiding research questions (refer to page 3). The first was whether an element of technology could be combined with face-to-face SFBT. The second centred on client engagement and whether sending between session text

messages would increase this. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, however, a more general question was to discover what it was like for clients and for myself as the counsellor, when texting was used to create between session messages. The two main findings of this research are that there is evidence that the use of technology can sit well alongside face-to-face SFBT counselling and there is evidence to support the co-construction of text messages that can be used to increase the helpfulness for clients of using Between Session Tasks in their counselling. These findings will now be discussed in more depth alongside some implications for counsellors who might want to use text messages between sessions.

### **6.1 There is evidence that the use of technology can sit well alongside face-to-face SFBT counselling.**

This is not a full E-therapy approach, however, the data presented suggest that the use of technology does help young people engage with face-to-face SFBT counselling. This finding is consistent with literature that technology-based platforms may help young people to seek help (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014; Glasheen et al., 2015; Khadjesari et al., 2011).

Co-construction of the text messages participants received was integral to this research. Literature suggests that when clients are given written reminders of homework to take away from therapy, they have clear concrete goals of therapy (De Jong & Berg, 2012; Tanner, 2009; Hanton, 2011). Furthermore, clients who are involved in the process of setting homework (co-construction) have better outcomes for therapy (Detweiler-Bedell & Whisman, 2005). In addition to the benefits of setting Between Session Tasks, research suggests that co-constructed Between Session Tasks are more helpful to the participant than SFBT without Between Session Tasks (Tanner, 2016). In this research, the co-construction of text messages appeared to help participants experience a sense of agency.

The co-construction of the text messages provided a further opportunity to embed key SFBT principles into the text messages themselves. By embedding participants' language and a positive focus, it enabled a consistent approach for the participant with both a face-to-face approach and the between session text messages. The inclusion of the participant in 'key decisions' (e.g. the time of day they would receive the text messages, the number of messages, and dialogue around what would be helpful to be sent in a between session text message) was integral for increasing agency.

The co-construction process also respected the participants' expertise. In accordance with SFBT principles, the participants felt that they were included in the co-construction process, and that their voice was valued. This resulted in increasing participant agency from session to session, with participants giving more input into the co-construction process.

The co-construction needed to be individualised to each participant. Some participants required more guidance than others within the co-construction process. It appeared that one participant that had not been to counselling previously had to have more guidance during the co-construction. This did not matter however, as it just took longer to explain both the counselling process and the research process. The process of co-construction appeared to become harder for some participants around the third session, nearing the conclusion of the research. It is challenging to ascertain whether this was due to the co-construction process not being engaging, or a myriad of other external factors (e.g. school holidays, participants' mood, or the time of the day).

## **6.2 There is evidence to support the use of co-construction of text messages to increase the helpfulness for clients of using between session tasks in their counselling.**

There was overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants on combining between session text messages with a traditional face-to-face SFBT approach. The co-constructed

content of the text messages was reported as being helpful for participants in a number of different ways;

Participants reported that the *inclusion of their own language* was important, and all participants spent some time during the co-construction process defining the most appropriate terminology to be sent in the between session text messages. This is a particularly useful finding for counsellors who are looking at integrating an element of technology into counselling as so often text message-based communication can be misinterpreted (especially by young people).

Participants also liked that the text messages were *specific to them as individuals*, rather than being a generic, automated text message that may have seemed impersonal. Further, participants reported in their feedback that being reminded of their personal goals, and the successful strategies that worked for them as individuals, was helpful.

Participants also liked the *positive focus of the text messages*, as they encouraged them to look on the positive side of situations, encouraged positive self-talk, and acted as a boost to their confidence to act.

This sample had high engagement, with all four participants attending all of the individual sessions of counselling. Further, no participants voluntarily dropped out of the research. High engagement has been reported as a key strength of E-therapy approaches (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014; Navilluso Medical, 2016), and engagement in this research could have also been high due to the individualised, co-constructed text messages participants received between sessions. Further, listening and acknowledging participants' feedback about the between session text messages appeared to have been engaging for some participants. The small koha given to participants in appreciation of their participation in this research may have also encouraged engagement, however this koha was small in comparison

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to the time that they spent participating in the research (totalling four hours of counselling sessions, as well as time they spent reflecting on the text messages).

Feedback presented by participants suggest that the use of between session text messages allowed further reflection and refreshed them on session content. As documented in the results, one participant compared the text message like having another counselling session. Implications for clients are: less time in face-to-face therapy; promoting independent reflection; and is consistent with the core belief of SFBT of a 'brief nature'. Implications for counsellors and funders of inclusion of between session text messages could make SFBT briefer, thus allowing more clients to be seen and less demand on services.

Due to the reflective nature of counselling practice, it appeared that participants liked to be in control and feel that they were well prepared for sessions. Potentially clients are afraid of not being able to answer questions, getting tongue-tied or sitting through 'awkward silences'. Feedback from the participants suggested that the between session text messages enabled them to 'prepare for counselling'. Having the between session text message meant that the participant could look back on what was covered in previous sessions and this appeared to be comforting knowing that there were the text messages to fall back on if needed.

One other point about helpfulness relates to the impact the use of text messages had on my counselling practice. I was pleased to note that in the process of co-constructing text messages, I strengthened my use of helpful SFBT skills. Thus, I pre-supposed client agency, pre-supposed client expertise, and encouraged the client to focus on positive attributes in their life.

### **6.3 Research implications for counsellors**

There are several implications of this research for counsellors, including both its potential and its challenges.

#### **6.3.1 Potential to normalise counselling conversations**

This research allowed an insight into participants' other environmental situations (e.g. family and friends). Co-construction of the task involved discussion of who was important in the participant's life and gave the counsellor some picture of client support. The research had an impact on other people beyond the participant, adding potential further therapeutic value for clients, an insight into a client's support networks and decreasing the stigma of seeing a counsellor.

For a number of participants, the text messages 'broke the ice' about the stigma of accessing support in New Zealand. The text messages allowed them to share the progress they were making by attending counselling with others. Therefore, using text messages between sessions may have the effect of influencing others to access their own support. Further, as described in section 6.2, participants felt that the text messages helped them to prepare for each session. This has implications for counsellors who may benefit from having their clients ready and wanting to engage with each face-to-face session.

#### **6.3.2 Balancing a technology-based approach with face-to-face sessions**

While the engagement of participants in this research in the SFBT counselling was high, it is important to discuss the potential negative effects of using this approach long-term. That is, my initial motivation to include text messages came from an observation that my counselling clients were constantly using their mobile phones. By introducing text messages into the

counselling practice however, it may be that I was increasing clients' reliance on technology-based communication, and potentially decreasing the opportunity for young people to relate face-to-face. On the other hand, some clients did report that the text messages felt like they could replace a face-to-face session, thus having the potential to minimise demand on counselling services- an appealing feature to funders. Consideration needs to be made in regard to finding a balance between encouraging young people to gain access and engage in counselling through technology-based means, and encouraging them to relate face-to-face.

### 6.3.3 Counsellor burn-out

One feeling that came from the research that was not expected was the potential for counsellor "burnout". The process of sending out between session text messages was exhausting. The burnout was twofold. First, I felt the impact of having to write text messages after working a full day. Even though these text messages were co-constructed and planned with the participant, it still meant I had to review notes about the text message to be sent and schedule the time it was sent around the participant's preference of time of day to receive a text. Secondly, I was required to monitor the phone I used (as per the Human Ethics Committee's requirement) to check whether any participants texted back because they were unsafe. This made me feel like I was on call, and thus unable to relax and 'on edge'. While the delivery approach was manageable with a small sample size, a partially-automated text message system would be needed to deliver the approach to a larger sample. However, this would have to be balanced as one of the key strengths of this research, praised by the participants, was the non-automated and individualised nature of the between session text messages.



#### 6.3.4 Ethical considerations

During the research, there were some external factors that were out of the counsellor's control, including the physical environment of where the participant received the text messages and who the participant was with. This posed several ethical issues for me. For example, one participant presented with a primary issue of wanting to talk to her parents. This was potentially problematic, as I did not know if the participant was with her parents when she received the text messages. Further, there was no way of knowing if the participant had left the phone unattended, therefore allowing any person in the vicinity to read the message. Due to the co-constructed nature of the text messages, the messages sent in this research were generic. However, for future research if counsellors were to send out session-specific or client-sensitive information over text message, there are privacy implications that must be considered.

Further, the text messages in this research were a one-way interaction however, as noted above, I recognised that I had an obligation under the Code of Ethics of New Zealand Association of Counselling to ensure that the client was safe. I had put a safety plan in place if participants were to text back with any risk indicators, but I realised that being too available might impede on my own self-care.

#### 6.4 Limitations of the research

This research had a robust design that allowed for the participants' voices to be exposed, both throughout the co-construction and the thematic analysis. Transparency in the approach has been met with the inclusion of transcripts that describe how the co-construction took place. The method, and data have been described in sufficient detail to allow for a researcher or

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counsellor to copy the procedure or include text messaging into their counselling practice. Nevertheless, there are some limitations that need to be noted.

First, the sample comprised students who made the first approach to be included in the research. It could be argued that the more organised and motivated participants were those who were first to return their slips. Thus, perhaps they were more likely to engage with the co-construction of Between Session Tasks and text messages.

Secondly, the small sample of four participants and the qualitative nature of the research means that it is not easily generalised. However, the use of large parts of transcripts, inclusion of text messages and presenting the data themes, allowed for a large amount of data to be presented and for the reader to see that my conclusions are justified. The ability to generalise could be improved by conducting a larger scale qualitative research and/or including some quantitative measures.

Due to the research sample being a mix of participants who had attended counselling previously and one who had not, it is challenging to ascertain exactly what contributed to the positive response to the between session text messages. For example, since three of the four participants had already experienced counselling, the process of co-constructing homework may have been familiar to them and could have increased their engagement with this aspect of the research. Although this may be considered a limitation in terms of making claims about the usefulness of including text messages in counselling, it is considered a strength in terms of the effect it had on my practice. I noted that the inclusion of text messaging honed my ability to co-construct Between Session Tasks that were focused on client needs.

## **6.5 Future research**

As discussed in the limitations, any future research should have a larger sample size to increase its application and the ability to generalise from it. Further, the research design should include different sub-groups (e.g. people of varying ages, ethnicities, and people who have and have not been to counselling). To increase the research's reliability, quantitative measures should also be introduced.

This thesis was an exploratory research and has paved the way for future research to explore the extension of combining technology with SFBT face-to-face counselling. The exploratory nature of my research has meant that I have received feedback from participants about the helpfulness of text messages to support them in their Between Session Tasks. It would be interesting for a SFBT counsellor to use the skills of co-construction, amplification of exceptions and curiosity to help the client gain even more understanding of this helpfulness.

Further, I engaged text messages as part of the Between Session Task aspect of SFBT. However, other potential technology-based extensions to complement face-to-face practice could include using text messages or an iPad for clients to create scales to monitor their own progress with shifting towards their own preferred future. Continued exploration of complementary technologies and face-to-face practice is essential to supporting young people to overcome barriers and seek help if they need it.

## **7 Conclusion**

This practice-based research provided some understanding of whether adding between session text messages can complement face-to-face counselling practice with young people in New Zealand. Findings from a qualitative thematic analysis suggest two implications. First, Between Session Tasks can be extended with the use of co-constructed text messages, and second, technology can be used in conjunction with face-to-face therapy with young people. A SFBT technique of co-construction was utilised, which allowed key SFBT tools to be embedded in between session text messages, including a strengths-based focus, use of client language, and promoting client agency. Feedback from participants affirmed that they appreciated that the text messages were individualised, had a positive focus, and used their language. Two additional themes emerged within the data. First, the inclusion of the participant throughout the co-construction process appeared to promote client agency. Second, sending out text messages supported participant engagement with the task and normalised help seeking. This is an especially important finding given the negative stigma that surrounds mental health issues, and the fact that many young people do not seek the support they need. This research leaves a number of areas to be researched further, in particular the exploration of combining various technology-based approaches with face-to-face practice.

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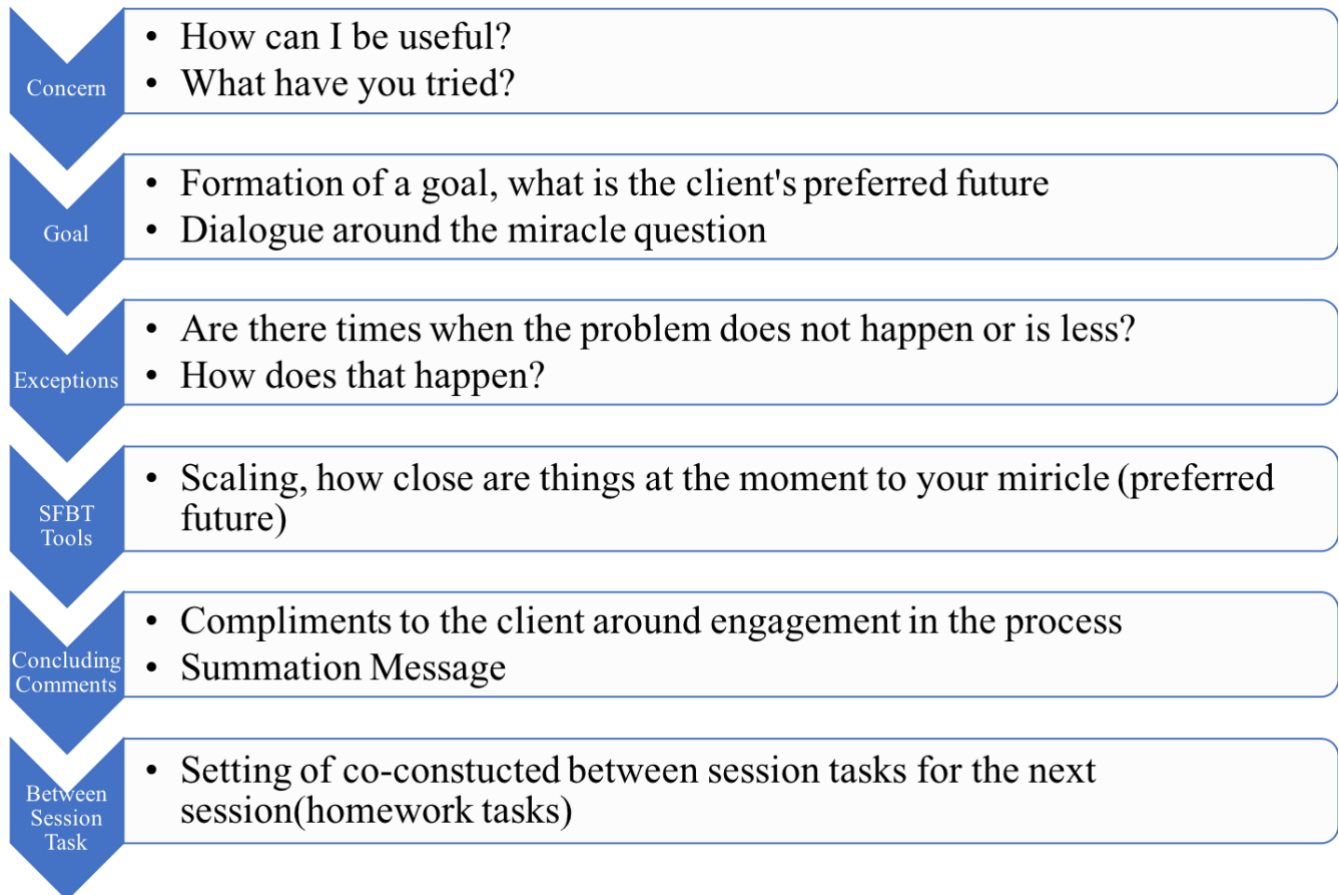
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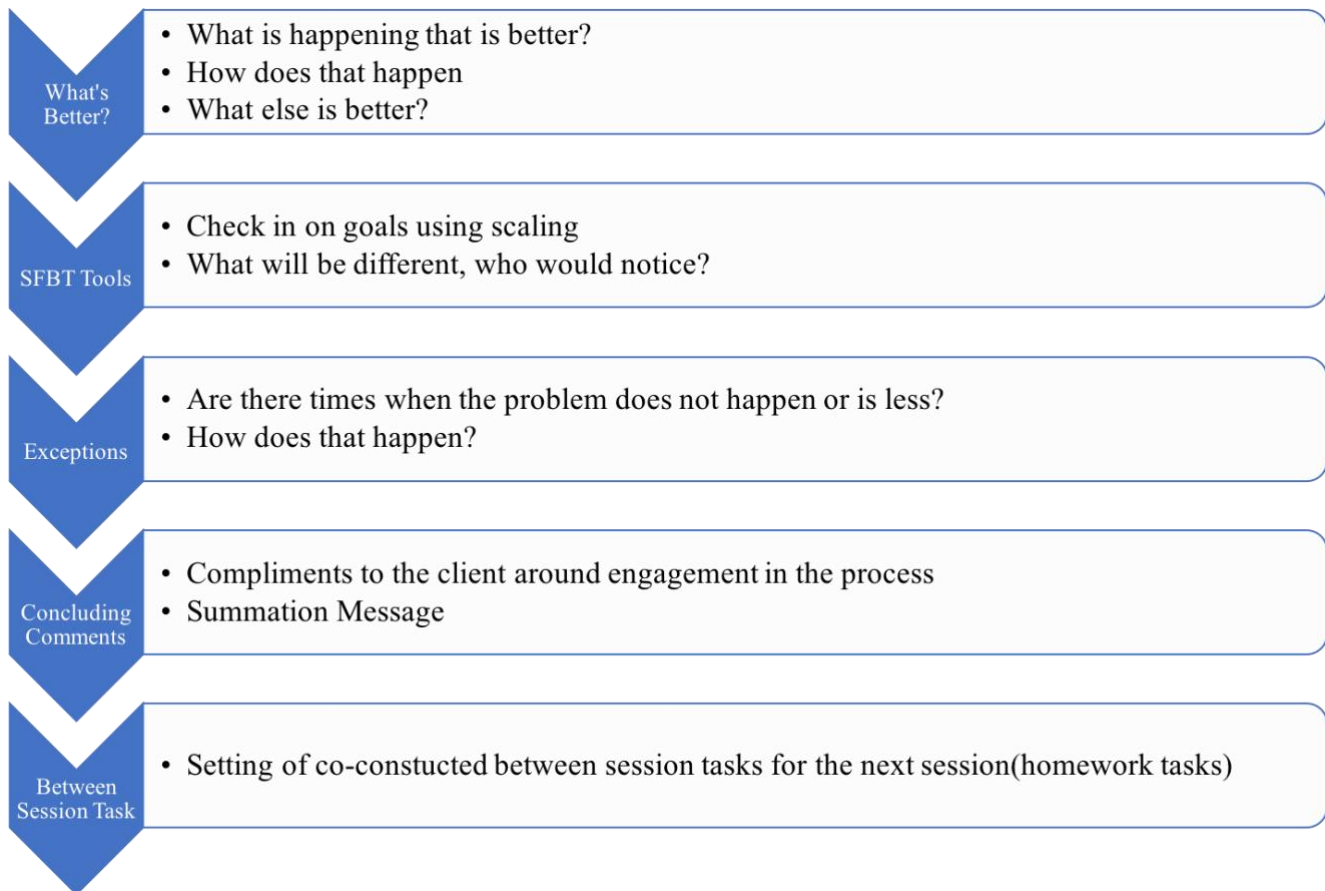
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## 9 Appendices

### **Appendix one:** *Outline for initial SFBT Sessions* (De Jong & Berg, 2012, pp. 390-391)




**Appendix two:** *Outline for later SFBT Sessions* (De Jong & Berg, 2012, pp. 392-393)



Between session text messages to support face-to-face counselling

### Appendix three: Research Recruitment poster



# TAKE PART

GET INVOLVED IN A TEXT MESSAGE BASED COUNSELLING STUDY

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## WHAT TO EXPECT

You will receive counselling sessions and will receive text messages throughout the week around goals that have been set in these sessions.

## WHAT YOU WILL GET

You will receive a Koha of movie vouchers for taking part in the research.

## HOW TO SIGN UP


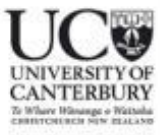
Please ask one of the counsellors for an information sheet and consent form, or email [REDACTED] to arrange a time to find out more information.

## INFORMATION

The research is being carried out by Mr Gribbin, who is a student counsellor at [REDACTED]. This research is a requirement of a Masters of Counselling.

Research is under the supervision of Shanee Barraclough. You may contact the research team on [REDACTED] shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz

The study has been approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, who may be contacted on: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz



## Appendix four: Information sheet for students



### Information Sheet for Students

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*



I am George Gribbin and this year I am working as an intern counsellor within the Guidance Department at [REDACTED]. I am also a second year Masters of Counselling student at the University of Canterbury. As a requirement of a Masters Degree through a University, you usually have to undertake a thesis or study and I have chosen to conduct my study through [REDACTED] Guidance Department.

I am interested in looking at an aspect of counselling practice related to homework tasks. At the end of a face-to-face counselling session we typically set some tasks to work on throughout the week and, if you agree to take part in this research, I will also send you a text message related to these tasks between counselling sessions. You are not expected to reply to these texts. There will be time to talk about how you found the texts messages at the beginning of each counselling session.

If you choose to participate, your involvement in this project will be:

- Meet with me to discuss your suitability for this research
- Parent/Guardian consent before any research takes place
- Counselling sessions will be 30-50 minutes with a commitment of 4-5 sessions, they will be conducted at [REDACTED] Guidance department
- You will receive 2-5 text-messages from me during the week between counselling sessions. You will not be expected to respond to these.
- Counselling sessions will be audio recorded with a Dictaphone. Only myself and an external transcriber will listen to these recordings, further, the transcriber will have to sign a confidentiality agreement prior and will not have any information that will be able to identify you. They will not be listened to by anybody else and the purpose is to create transcripts for use in research. There may be times where I may have to discuss my research progress and share transcripts with my University supervisors. All identifying information will be removed.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Further, withdrawing will not compromise your ability to access counselling. If you withdraw, I will remove information relating to you and you will not be part of the published research. The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this research. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, published documents and presentations will use pseudonyms and any identifying information will be taken out. You may receive a summary of the project results, please write your email on the consent form if you wish to receive a copy.

## Between session text messages to support face-to-face counselling

I will be using pseudonyms in any research related documents and these will be stored in password protected files my computer. Printed documents (consent forms) will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Canterbury for 5 years. After this they will be securely destroyed. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. The project is being carried out as a requirement of a Masters of Counselling, and is supervised by Shanee Barraclough, her contact details are: [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz). The Head of Guidance at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] has also approved this project and would be happy to talk to you if you have any questions [REDACTED].

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz). If you agree to participate in the study, please complete the consent form and return it to the Guidance department by \_\_\_\_\_ in a sealed envelope.

Koha in the way of a couple of movie vouchers will be given as a thank-you for taking part at the completion of the counselling sessions.

Kind Regards,

George Gribbin



### Key Contacts

Supervisor: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Primary Supervisor of Research  
Shanee Barraclough  
Phone: 03 364 2987 ext 3839  
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Complaints  
HEC (Human Ethics Committee Chair)  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Head of Guidance [REDACTED]:  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Secondary Supervisor of Research:  
Dr Judi Miller  
Phone: 03 364 2546  
Email: [judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz)

Researcher/ Counsellor: George Gribbin  
Phone [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)  
Email: [REDACTED]



## Appendix five: Consent form for students

### Consent form for Students

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*

Please Sign that you understand the below points and return in a sealed envelope to the Guidance Department by: \_\_\_\_\_

- I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.
- I understand that sessions will be audio recorded for transcripts and maybe transcribed by an external transcriber.
- I understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher, and that it will be kept confidential and secure. All data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years.
- I understand that neither I, nor my school, will be identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research and a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may choose to withdraw at any time and this will not jeopardise my access to counselling services.
- I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. I will send you a copy to your school email once complete.
- I understand that I can contact the researcher George Gribbin \_\_\_\_\_ or supervisor Shanee Barraclough [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print name (student) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Cellphone number for text messages: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email for summary of findings: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix six: Information sheet for Parents Guardians and Whānau**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Information Sheet for Parents, Guardians and Whānau,

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*

Dear Parents, Guardians and Whānau,

I am George Gribbin and this year I am working as an intern counsellor within the Guidance Department at [REDACTED]. I am asking permission from you for your child to be involved in this study as they are under 18 and it a requirement of the Ethics Committee at the University of Canterbury. As a requirement of a Masters Degree through a University, you usually have to undertake a thesis or study and I have chosen to conduct my study through [REDACTED].

I am interested in looking at what is happening between counselling sessions. Of particular interest are between sessions tasks, these are tasks that are set in between counselling sessions and I will send out one-way text-messages around those to your child throughout the week (2-5 messages per week).

If you and your child agree to be part of this study, they will be asked to-do the following:

Student involvement in this project will be:

- Meet with me to gauge suitability for this research
- Gain Parent/Guardian consent before any research takes place
- Attend counselling sessions of 30-50 minutes with a commitment of 4-5 sessions, they will be conducted at [REDACTED] Guidance department
- Counselling sessions will be audio recorded with a Dictaphone. Only myself and an external transcriber will listen to these recordings, further, the transcriber will have to sign a confidentiality agreement prior and will not have any information that will be able to identify you. They will not be listened to by anybody else and the purpose is to create transcripts for use in research. There may be times where I may have to discuss my research progress and share transcripts with my University supervisors. All identifying information will be removed.

As a guardian, you may receive an overview of the results by writing your email address on the consent form. Your child's participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw you child at any stage without penalty. To ensure anonymity of your child, published documents and presentations will use pseudonyms and any identifying information will be taken out. In addition pseudonyms will be used in any research related documents and these will be stored in password protected files my computer. Printed documents (consent forms)


will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Canterbury for 5 years. After this they will be securely destroyed.

A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. The project is being carried out as a requirement of a Masters of Counselling, and supervised by Shanee Barraclough, her contact details are: [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz). The Head of Guidance at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] has also approved this project and would be happy to talk to you if you have any questions [REDACTED]

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)). If you agree for your child to participate in the study, please complete the consent form and return it to the Guidance department.

Koha in the way of a couple of movie vouchers will be given to your child as a thank-you for taking part at the completion of the counselling sessions.

Kind Regards,



George Gribbin

#### Key Contacts

[REDACTED] Supervisor:  
[REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Primary Supervisor of Research  
Shanee Barraclough  
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[shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz)

Complaints  
HEC (Human Ethics Committee Chair)  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Head of Guidance [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]  
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Secondary Supervisor of Research:  
Dr Judi Miller  
Phone: 03 364 2546  
Email: [judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz)

Researcher/ Counsellor: George Gribbin  
[REDACTED]  
(Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)  
Email: [REDACTED]

**Appendix seven: Consent form for Parents, Guardians and Whānau**

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Consent Sheet for Parents, Guardians and Whānau,

Title: *A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*



Please Sign that you understand the below points and return in a sealed envelope to the guidance department by: \_\_\_\_\_

- I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand what is required of my child if I agree for him/her to take part in the research.
- I understand that by signing this form it doesn't mean that I will be able to access any information that my child talks about in sessions and these remain confidential.
- I understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher, and that it will be kept confidential and secure. All data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years.
- I understand that neither my child, nor my school, will be identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research and a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary. My child may choose to withdraw at any time and this will not jeopardise their access to counselling services. I may choose to withdraw consent for my child at any time
- I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. You can write your email address below for the report to be sent to.
- I understand that I can contact the researcher George Gribbin [REDACTED] or supervisor Shanee Barraclough [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

By signing below, I agree for my child to participate in this research project.

Full name (Child) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email for Research Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian (Print Name): \_\_\_\_\_ Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix eight: Information sheet for Principal**

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone [REDACTED] Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)

Information Sheet for Principal,

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*



Dear [REDACTED],

I am George Gribbin and this year I am working as an intern counsellor within the Guidance Department at [REDACTED]. I am so grateful for the support within [REDACTED] and thoroughly enjoying my placement. In addition to the placement, I am also a second year Masters of Counselling student at the University of Canterbury. As a requirement of a Masters Degree through a University, I have chosen to conduct my study through [REDACTED] Guidance Department.

Recruitment will be from students who are attending counselling or would like to attend at the [REDACTED] guidance department. I am interested in looking at what is happening between counselling sessions. Of particular interest are between sessions tasks, these are tasks that are set in between counselling sessions and I will send out one-way text-messages around these tasks to students throughout the week (2-5 messages per week).

If students wish to take part they will be required to:

- Meet with me to discuss their suitability for this research
- Receive an information sheet and sign a consent form
- Gain Parent/Guardian consent before any research takes place
- Attend counselling sessions of 30-50 minutes with a commitment of 4-5 sessions, they will be conducted at [REDACTED] Guidance department
- Counselling sessions will be audio recorded with a Dictaphone. Only myself and an external transcriber will only listen to these recordings, further, the transcriber will have to sign a confidentiality agreement prior and will not have any information that will be able to identify you. They will not be listened to by anybody else and the purpose is to create transcripts for use in research. There may be times where I may have to discuss my research progress and share transcripts with my University supervisors. All identifying information will be removed.

As a Principal, you may receive an overview of the results by writing your email on the consent form. Every student's participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Further, withdrawing will not compromise any student's ability to access counselling within the [REDACTED] guidance department. Your participation in the project is also voluntary and you may withdraw a student if you deem necessary.

To ensure anonymity of your school and any students published documents and presentations will use pseudonyms and any identifying information will be taken out. Any statements regarding location will be referred to as "a New Zealand Co-Educational High

School” and letters such as this will be included, but identifying information will be blanked out. In addition, pseudonyms will be used in any research related documents and these will be stored in password protected files my computer. Printed documents (consent forms) will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Canterbury for 5 years. After this they will be securely destroyed.

The project is being carried out as a requirement of a Masters of Counselling, and supervised by Shanee Barraclough, her contact details are: [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz). The Head of Guidance at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has also approved this project and would be happy to talk to you if you have any questions.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz). If you agree for your students of [REDACTED] to participate in the study, please complete the consent form and return it to the Guidance department or email George Gribbin with the form completed.

Kind Regards,



*George Gribbin*

#### Key Contacts

[REDACTED] Supervisor:  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED])

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

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Complaints  
HEC (Human Ethics Committee Chair)  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Head of Guidance [REDACTED]:  
Mr [REDACTED] (Head of Guidance,  
[REDACTED])

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Secondary Supervisor of Research:  
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Phone: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)  
Email: [REDACTED]

**Appendix nine:** *Consent form for Principal*

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED] (Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)

Consent Form for Principal

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*



- I have read the information sheet and understand what the study involves and I agree for this study to go ahead at [REDACTED] Guidance department.
- I agree to the [REDACTED] logo to be used in conjunction with the University of Canterbury logo on information sheets, posters and consent forms. This is to ensure the credibility of the study in communications to parent/guardians.
- I understand that neither the student attending counselling, nor the school, will be identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research and that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. You can write your email address below for the report to be sent to.
- I understand that our participation in the project is voluntary and that we may withdraw the school from the project at any time without incurring penalty.
- I understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher, and that it will be kept confidential and secure. All data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years.
- I understand that I can contact the researcher George Gribbin [REDACTED] or supervisor Shanee Barraclough [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Email for Research Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix ten: Information sheet for Head of Guidance**

George Gribbin

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone [REDACTED] (Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)



### Information Sheet for Head of Guidance

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*

Dear [REDACTED],

I am George Gribbin and as you are aware I am working as an intern counsellor within the Guidance Department at [REDACTED]. I am so grateful for the support within the [REDACTED] and thoroughly enjoying my placement. In addition to the placement, I am also a second year Masters of Counselling student at the University of Canterbury. As a requirement of a Masters Degree through a University, I have chosen to conduct my study through [REDACTED] Guidance Department.

Recruitment will be from students who are attending counselling or would like to attend at the [REDACTED] guidance department. I am interested in looking at what is happening between counselling sessions. Of particular interest are between sessions tasks, these are tasks that are set in between counselling sessions and I will send out one-way text-messages around these tasks to students throughout the week (2-5 messages per week).

If students wish to take part they will be required to:

- Meet with me to discuss their suitability for this research
- Receive an information sheet and sign a consent form
- Gain Parent/Guardian consent before any research takes place
- Attend counselling sessions of 30-50 minutes with a commitment of 4-5 sessions, they will be conducted at [REDACTED] Guidance department
- Counselling sessions will be audio recorded with a Dictaphone. Only myself and an external transcriber will only listen to these recordings, further, the transcriber will have to sign a confidentiality agreement prior and will not have any information that will be able to identify you. They will not be listened to by anybody else and the purpose is to create transcripts for use in research. There may be times where I may have to discuss my research progress and share transcripts with my University supervisors. All identifying information will be removed.

As a Head of Guidance, you may receive an overview of the results by writing your email on the consent form. Every student's participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Further, withdrawing will not compromise any student's ability to access counselling within the [REDACTED] guidance department. Your participation in the project is also voluntary and you may withdraw consent of the Guidance Department from the project at any time without incurring penalty.




To ensure anonymity of your school and any students published documents and presentations will use pseudonyms and any identifying information will be taken out. Any statement regarding location will be referred to as “a New Zealand Co-Educational High School” and letters such as this will be included, but identifying information will be blanked out. In addition, pseudonyms will be used in any research related documents and these will be stored in password protected files my computer.

Printed documents (consent forms) will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Canterbury for 5 years. After this they will be securely destroyed.

The project is being carried out as a requirement of a Masters of Counselling, and supervised by Shanee Barraclough, her contact details are: [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz). Further, this project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)). If you agree for your students of [REDACTED] to participate in the study, please complete the consent form and return it to the Guidance department or email the George Gribbin with the form completed.

Kind Regards,



George Gribbin

#### Key Contacts

[REDACTED] Supervisor:  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED])

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Primary Supervisor of Research  
Shanee Barraclough  
Phone: 03 364 2987 ext 3839  
Email: [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz)

Complaints  
HEC (Human Ethics Committee Chair)  
Email: [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Head of Guidance [REDACTED]:  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED])

Phone: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Secondary Supervisor of Research:  
Dr Judi Miller  
Phone: 03 364 2546  
Email: [judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:judi.miller@canterbury.ac.nz)

Researcher/ Counsellor: George Gribbin  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays)  
Email: [REDACTED]

**Appendix eleven: Consent form for head of Guidance**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Consent form for Head of Guidance



*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*

- I have read the information sheet and understand what the study involves and I agree for this study to go ahead at [REDACTED] Guidance department.
- I understand that the researcher will keep the data collected for 5 years and that it will be kept confidential and secure in a password-protected folder, backed up onto the university server.
- I understand that our participation in the project is voluntary and that we may withdraw students from the project at any time without incurring penalty.
- I understand that an internal supervision relationship will continue, however, consultation around the study will be kept as minimal to protect clients' anonymity.
- I understand that neither the student attending counselling, nor they school, will be identified in any presentations or publications that draw on this research and a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- I am happy for posters to be put up around the guidance department and counselling colleagues can suggest the study to their current clients
- I understand that I can contact the researcher [REDACTED] or supervisor Shanee Barraclough [shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shanee.barraclough@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@canterbury.ac.nz))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email for

report: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix twelve:** *Transcriber confidentiality agreement*

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

*Title: A solution focused student counsellor's reflections on adding text-message prompts about homework tasks into counselling.*

Researcher: George Gribbin

Transcriber: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to transcribe the audiotapes/videotapes for the above research project. I understand that the information contained within them is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone other than the researchers involved in this study. The parameters on how much of a session that is to be transcribed will be discussed on a session by session basis. Please keep a log of time spent transcribing and provide receipts for University accounting purposes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This was not used through the research and transcripts were made by the researcher. This has been included in the appendices to show the framework was in place if a transcriber was required.